PANDITA RAMABAI

"It is characteristic of Ramabai that she works with all her heart and soul for the highest ideals she knows; and as soon as more light dawns upon her, she leaves the things that are behind, and reaches out to that which opens up in the vista of the future. This thought explains the developments of our work and plans during the past years, and prepares those who know her well for further surprising developments in the future."

THIS tribute to Ramabai written by a friend, who had long been intimate with her, exactly reveals to us the secret of the success of this wonderful woman, who, with undaunted courage, unfailing pluck, and immense labour at a very unfavourable time, won, light and liberty for herself and her sisters out of darkness and bondage. A poor Indian widow, yet a heroine in every sense of the term, Pandita Ramabai deserves indeed to be a prominent personage in the History of India. As a biographer says of her, "among the new women of India, few if any have deeper claims to distinction than the Ramabai Sarasvati, who has proved herself a thinker

as well as a heroine, and whose name deserves to be enshrined as a household word in the home of every one of her Indian sisters."

Ramabai was born in April 1858. Her father was Ananta Shastri Dongre, a learned Brahman. His teacher had been tutor to one of the princesses in the family of the Peshwas, and to that fact therefore must have been due the happy effect that Ramabai's father, unlike the rigid Brahmans of that time, was yet strongly in favour of women's education. Ananta Shastri was rather surprised, we are told, to hear of an Indian woman knowing Sanskrit, and he made up his mind to get his wife educated. But public opinion was against him. His own wife and mother frustrated his plan, which he was obliged to give up for that time. After some years his wife died, and he married a little girl of nine years to whom his mother gave the usual domestic training. The worthy Shastri insisted this time on his right to teach his wife. Things however were made unpleasant for him: and he took her away to a forest in the Western Ghats, on the borders of the Mysore State. Here he

built a little home for her, and lived by the proceeds of his rice fields and cocoanut plantations. He taught her Sanskrit, and introduced her to the secrets of Puranic literature. The Brahman pandits in the Mangalore District objected strongly to his enlightened views about women and summoned him before their assembly to give reasons why he might not be excommunicated for his heresy. The Shastri, nothing daunted, began to quote passages from the ancient sacred books which did not forbid education to women and Sudras. So he was not excommunicated, but was allowed to pass as an "Orthodox Reformer". And so he went on with his work of love, and succeeded so well in his efforts that, when the children were born, she was able to carry on their religious education herself. "It would be scarcely too much to say", says Mrs. Sullivan,

> **"That Ramabai's ideal of educated Indian womanhood was formed in germ, when as a little child, she sat on her mother's knee, and looking up into that dear face, felt that her mother was the embodiment of wisdom and tenderness, the best mother in the world."**

Ramabai was given a complete education in Sanskrit. She tells us:—

Secular education of any kind was looked upon as leading people to worldliness, which would prevent them from getting into the way of Moksha or liberation from everlasting trouble of reincarnation in millions and millions of animal species, and undergoing the pains of suffering countless millions of diseases and deaths. To learn the English language, and to come into contact with the Mlechhas, as the non-Hindus are called, was forbidden on pain of losing caste, and all hope of future happines. So all that we could or did learn was the Sanskrit grammar and dictionaries, with the Puranic and modern poetical literature in that language. Most of these, including grammar and dictionaries, which are written in verse form, had to be committed to memory.

Ramabai, at twelve years of age could repeat about twenty thousand sacred verses, and it was no wonder that afterwards she came to be known as " Pandita ". She was able to get a good knowledge of Marathi from her parents, and later, when she was travelling, of Canarese, Hindustani, and Bengali. Thus she became, as Mrs. Dyer calls her, " a prodigy of erudition".

Ramabai's father was a very religious man, and tried to carry out his ideals into practice. One of these was hospitality; and for thirteen years he entertained pilgrims who came to the sacred places near his home. Finally all his property was swallowed up, and he was forced,

with his family, to leave his home and begin a pilgrim's life himself. Ramabai was only six months old then, and had to be carried about for a time in a cane box on a man's head. Thus "my pilgrim's life began", she tells us, "when I was a little baby".

Anantha Shastri was a Puranika or Puranic reader. This is how his daughter writes about his profession.

> "Ever since I remember anything, my father and mother were always travelling from one sacred place to another, staying in each place for some months bathing in the sacred river or tank, visiting temples, worshipping household Gods, and the images of Gods in the temples, and reading Purana in temples or in some convenient place".

The reading of the Purana served a double purpose. The first and foremost was that of getting rid of sin and of earning merit in order to obtain Moksha. The other purpose was to earn an honest living without begging.

For seven years they travelled about. They were very orthodox Hindus and extremely strict about castes. For instance, on a long journey by sea they allowed not a bit of food or a drop of water to pass through their lips, and that went on for three days of misery. It was

not wonderful, therefore, that the father's health broke up, and he did not know what to do for his living. The children, of whom there were three, had had no secular education as we have seen and so could not earn their living. Ramabai says :

"Our parents had unbounded faith in what the sacred books said. They encouraged us to look to the Gods to get our support. The sacred books declared that if people worshipped the gods in particular ways, gave alms to the Brahmans, repeated the names of certain Gods, and also some hymns in their honour, with fasting and the performance of penance, the gods and goddesses would appear, and talk to the worshippers, and give them whatever they desired. So we spent all the money we had in giving alms to Brahmans to please the Gods. We went to several sacred places and temples to worship different Gods and to bathe in sacred rivers and tanks to free ourselves from sin and curse, which brought poverty on us".

About this time, famine had been making itself felt, and in 1876-77 it reached its culmination. The little family sold all its valued possessions, reaching finally even the cooking vessels of brass and copper, and even then half of the proceeds was devoted to charity. Finally, Rambai writes :—

"The day came when we had finished eating the last grain of rice, and nothing but death by starvation remained for our portion. Oh! the sorrow, helplessness, and the disgrace of the situation."

Ramabai gives a very pathetic account of these terrible days. The little family consulted together, and at last made up their minds to go to the forest to die. They left Tirupati, wandered in the jungle for eleven days and nights, living on water and wild dates. At last, the father collapsed, and made up his mind to die leaving the others to either drown themselves or separate, and go about severally. He bade farewell to his children. Says Ramabai :—

"I was his youngest child," and my turn came last. I shall never forget his last injunctions to me.

His blind eyes could not see my face, but he held me tight in his arms and stroking my head and cheeks, he told me in a few words broken by emotion to remember how he loved me and how he had taught me to do right and never to depart from the way of righteousness. His last loving command to me was to lead an honourable life if I lived at all and to serve God all my life. 'Remember, my child', he said, "you are my youngest, my most beloved child. I have given you into the hand of our God. You are His and to Him alone you must belong, and serve all your life.' He could speak no more. My father's Prayers to me were heard by the Almighty, the all-merciful Heavenly Father, whom the old Hindu did not know. The God of all flesh did not find it impossible to bring me a great sinner and unworthy child of his, out of heathen darkness into the saving light of the love and salvation. I listened to my father. I was but too young, too bewildered to understand him. We were after this dismissed from father's presence. He wanted one hour for meditation and Preparation before death".

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It was a heart-rending situation, but relief came for a while. The son, hitherto unused to manual labour, now had the sudden idea to offer to work. That such a course was left to the very last shows their pride and unwillingness to take to manual work through "pride of caste, superior learning and vanity of life."

And so the infirm father was carried down to the nearest village by the son, and the little family took refuge for four days in the ruins of an old temple. There the old man had fever, and since nothing but coarse food could be given him, succumbed to the malady and died on the third day. A grave was dug for him by the servant of a good friend, and the son carried the dead body tied up in his dhotie like a bundle. The Shastri was buried; for according to the Sastras, a Sanyasi like him could be buried and not burnt. That same day, the mother was attacked by fever. But the little family had to leave that place to look for work. They walked for some distance, and then, by the kindness of some people, got the train-fare as far as Raichur, where they stayed for some weeks in helpless misery.

Sometimes, they suffered intense hunger. Once the mother was so hungry that poor Ramabai had to go to a neighbour's house to beg for some bread. She tells us:

> I went there very reluctantly. The lady spoke kindly to me, but I could on no account open my mouth to beg that piece of bajree bread. With superhuman effort and a firm resolution to keep my feelings from that lady I kept the tears back; but they poured out of my nose instead of my eyes, in spite of me, and the expression of my face told its own story. The kind Brahmin lady guessing what was in my mind, asked me if I would like to have some food. So I said, "Yes, I want only a little piece of bajree bread." She gave me what I wanted, and I felt very grateful, but could not say a word to express my gratitude. I ran to my mother in haste, and gave it to her. But she could not eat, she was too weak.

So the mother also died, and shortly after, the sisters; and the brother and Ramabai were left alone. They wandered on to the north and east of India. The wages for manual work were very small, somtimes only about Rs. four a month. Sometimes, they were unusually hungry, and they swallowed the hard stones of the wild berries, as well as their coarse skins. Sometimes, they were so cold that they had to bury their bodies in grave-like pits, and cover themselves with dry sand. But still they kept their old faith as long as they could, though

wavering somewhat in their adherence. For three years, they wandered about, actually doing about four thousand miles on foot.

After wandering even as far as Kashmir they found themselves in Calcutta in 1878. All the great troubles she had undergone had but strengthened the fine character of Ramabai and given her that steadfastness which later stood her in such good stead. Her tender heart felt more than ever now for the poor, the helpless and the down-trodden. True to her father's training, Ramabai had all along felt that Indian women and especially child-widows were in a very unfortunte position, and she made up her mind to devote her life to their cause. She condemned the practice of child-marriage and also the custom of seclusion within the purdah. She declared that, since ignorance was the cause of evil, women, especially high-caste girls, should receive some education. And, as they would not have time enough for study after marriage, they should be taught before marriage. Ramabai did not know English then. So she advocated the teaching of Sanskrit and the study of the

Vedanta. Being, as we have seen, a very capable woman, she began to give lectures, which created a great sensation in Calcutta. All her statements she strengthened so well with quotations from the Hindu Sastras that the Pandits gave her the title of "Saraswati"; and Sir William Hunter thus reported of her in one of his letters to England:—

"Last October (1880), while I was writing these pages, an accomplished Brahman lady was travelling through Bengal with her brother, holding public meetings on the education and emancipation of women. 'They were received everywhere,' says an Indian correspondent, 'with great enthusiasm by the Hindus, who were delighted to hear their holy Sanskrit from a woman's lips. It seemed to them as if Saraswati, the Goddess of eloquence had come down to visit them. Instead of a hot confined room, we had a long and broad terrace, open to the sky, and with the Ganges flowing at our feet. The meeting was at half-past four in the afternoon, by which time the terrace was shaded from the sun by trees and houses to the westward. At the eastern end of the terrace, a small marble table with a glass of flowers on it, and some chairs were set, and there Ramabai stood up facing the west, and addressed the audience. On her right was the Ganges, covered with large broad-sailed boats of a type, which has perhaps lasted for two thousand years. There was little or nothing to remind her or her audience of European civilisation. It was such a place as Buddha might have chosen for addressing his followers.'

* * * "This young lady is twenty-two years of age, the daughter of a learned Pandit and public official, slight and girlish-looking, with a fair complexion and light-grey eyes."

Ramabai's brother died sometime after their arrival at Calcutta. He was very anxious about his sister; but she assured him that with the help of God all would be well with her. And so it was. She had not been married by her enlightened father at an early age, like most Brahman girls. He had had a lesson in the case of his elder daughter, and so he put off Ramabai's marriage till his death. When she was twenty-two, she was still unmarried. Then, having given up by that time all rigidity in her father's religion, she married Bipin Bihari Medhavi, a young Sudra Bengali pleader, who was an M. A. of the Calcutta University. They went to Assam, where they lived happily for two years. Then Mr. Medhavi died suddenly of cholera, leaving her alone with her little daughter, whom she had called, Manorama or "Heart's Joy."

After the death of her husband, Ramabai went to Poona and began to lecture and write largely on the education of women. She found well-known people like Ranade, Kelkar, and Bhandarkar, strongly supporting her. Whenever she had time, she carried her

teaching into practice by giving instruction to women in morality and religion. Finally, she founded a society of women called "The Arya Mahila Samaj," branches of which were formed throughout the Mahratta country.

Ramabai had always wished to help Indian widows, like herself by starting a home of education and shelter for them. But it was difficult to get financial help. One day, a little Brahman widow of twelve years, who had been cast off by her relatives, came to her, begging not only for food and a home, but also for help against the grasping hands of wicked men. Ramabai, who was never slow in action, began her beloved work of rescue, by taking this poor child into her own little home. Later, this woman was able to help her in her settlement at Mukti.

In 1882 a Commission to enquire into the question of education in India was appointed; and included women's education as one of its special agenda. This Commission received a pleasant reception from the three hundred Brahman women of the Arya Mahila Samaj, at which the eloquent Ramabai spoke on her pet

subject. She was asked to give her evidence before the Commission; and, putting forward the views of reformers like her father, her brother, her husband and her friends, she spoke boldly about the urgent need of education for Indian women. She suggested the training of men-teachers and women-inspectors; and she requested that, since in India the conditions were such that proper medical treatment could only reach the sick women of India through the women themselves, the study of medicine should be thrown open to Indian women.

Ramabai's evidence created a great sensation and reached the ears of Queen Victoria herself, bearing fruit later in the starting of the women's medical movement by Lady Dufferin. The Pandita now began to feel the need for herself of a good training and of a proper acquaintance with the English language. So, overcoming a great deal of natural hesitation, she left for England in 1883. She was met there by the Sisters of Wantage, one of whom she had known in Poona. She went to their home, St. Mary's Home as it was called,

for a year to learn English. Then she went to the Ladies' College at Cheltanham, where for two years she supported herself by teaching Sanskrit, at the same time studying Mathematics, Natural Science and English Literature. "I owe an everlasting debt of gratitude to the Sisters", she wrote to Miss Beale, the late Lady Principal of Cheltanham Ladies' College, "these ladies took great pains with me and taught me the subjects which would help me in my life".

As we have seen, Ramabai and her brother, before they reached Calcutta in 1878, had become dissatisfied with the Hindu religion. They had found it inadequate for their needs and longings. When they went to Calcutta, they came into touch with Christians and attended their services and social gatherings. This is what Ramabai wrote of the first one of such she attended:—

> We looked upon the proceedings of the assembly with curiosity, but did not understand what they were about. After a little while, one of them opened a book and read something out of it, and then they all knelt down before their chairs and some one said something with closed eyes; we were told that was the way they prayed to God. We did not see any image to which they paid their homage, but it seemed

as though they were paying homage to the chairs, before which they knelt. Such was the crude idea of Christian worship that impressed itself on my mind.

She was given a copy of the Bible in Sanskrit, but found the language and the teaching so different from what she was accustomed to, that she did not spend much time on it then. Later, while instructing the women about religion, she began to carefully study the Shastras, and found what she thought were many contradictions among them. For instance she quoted the following from the Mahabharata :—" The Vedas differ from each other ; *Smritis*, that is, books of sacred laws, do not agree with one another ; the secret of religion is in some hidden place ; the only way is that which is followed by great men". But what chiefly set her against the Hindu religion was its attitude towards women. No woman could attain Moksha. Her only god was her husband, however undeserving he might be ; and only by pleasing him could she attain Swarga, or higher existence, and that too as his wife and slave. But, she could not get Moksha or utter liberation, which was the true heaven, as a woman, for she could not study

the Vedas through which alone the true knowledge of Brahma was to be had.

Ramabai found the Sudras in the same case as the women. As for low-caste people, they were not given hope of any sort. Placed in the same category as the lowest species of animals, whose very shadow and sound were thought to be defiling, the only hope of Heaven for them was the very remote chance of being reincarnated as one of the higher castes. In the meanwhile, the sacred Brahmans kept as far from them as possible and never thought it necessary to provide them with even temples for worship.

One day, Ramabai met Keshub Chunder Sen and was taken by him to his house and introduced to his wife and daughters. He gave her a copy of the Vedas to read, in spite of her protestation that women should not be allowed to study the sacred books. So, fortified by his large-heartedness, she began to read the Vedas and Vedanta, but still she was not satisfied. Then she came across a Bengali translation of St. Luke's Gospel, after which she read the book of Genesis, which was

explained to her by Mr. Allen, a Baptist Missionary. The stories in both appealed to her. Having no religion to hold to, she thought she would like to try the Christian religion. But her husband, who was then alive, was very vexed with her and stopped her religious studies for a time.

After his death, she went on with the study of the New Testament. When she went to England she was much impressed by the Christian work of the Sisters of Wantage. She saw that a new force, called the love of Christ, had come into the lives of women, a force which filled them with pity and love for all fallen creatures, specially for unfortunate and erring women, to whom the Hindu religion was very severe. She heard the story of Christ and His generosity to the sinful Samaritan Woman. She read of His divine pity for all sinners; and she realised that Christianity alone, among all the religions she had known, was the true religion of uplift, salvation and hope for the down-trodden and the wicked. As she said :

"While the old Hindu Scriptures have given us some

beautiful precepts of living, the New Dispensation of Christ has given us the grace to carry these principles into practice; and that makes all the difference in the world. The precepts are like the steam-engine on the track, beautiful and with great possibilities; Christ and his Gospel are the steam, the motive power that can make the engine move".

So she became intellectually convinced of the truth of Christianity and was baptised at Wantage in 1883. After that, she went on with her religious studies, for she knew that real heart-knowledge of Christ had not come to her. As she wrote, "I came to know, after eight years from the time of my baptism, that I had found the Christian religion, which was good enough for me; but I had not found Christ, who is the Life of the religion and the Light of every man that cometh into the world". For two years, she tells us she was very unhappy. Then she realised, from a book called "From Wealth unto Life" by Mr. Haslam, the Evangelist, that instead of working upwards, she was working from the top against all recognised rules. Gradually light came to her. She wrote as follows about her struggle:—

"I do not know if any one of my readers has ever had the experience of being shut up in a room, where

there was nothing but thick darkness, and then groping in it to find something of which he or she was in dire need. I can think of no one but the blind man, whose story is given in John 9. He was born blind, and, remained so for forty years of his life, and then suddenly he found the Mighty One, who could give him eyesight. Who could have described his joy at seeing the daylight, when there had not been a particle of hope of his ever seeing it? Even the inspired Evangelist has not attempted to do it. I can give only a faint idea of what I felt when my mental eyes were opened and when I, who was 'sitting in the darkness, saw great light', and when I felt sure that to me who, but a few moments ago 'sat in the region and shadow of death, light had sprung up.' I was very like the man who was told, 'In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk'. 'And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God.' The Holy Spirit made it clear to me from the word of God, that the salvation which God gives through Christ is present, and not something future. I believed it, I received it, and was filled with joy."

But all that took a long time. In the meantime, she had progressed much in several ways. In 1885 she went to America in response to an invitation from her cousin Mrs. Anandabai Joshi, who had gone there sometime before to study medicine. Her theories now began to take practical shape. She was so fascinated by the educational system of America, that instead of staying a few weeks as she originally intended, she stayed there three years. She studied the public school system and took a

training in Kindergarten study as well as in methods of agriculture, weaving, printing, laundry work, sewing work, embroidery and so on. She found a good friend in Miss R. Bodley, A.M., M.D., the Dean of the Women's Medical College, Philadelphia, from where Dr. Joshi took her degree of M.D. Ramabai had always advocated that a school should be started by Indian women for Indian Women, where they could have industrial as well mental training; but, hitherto, her highest ambition had been to secure a Government appointment in India. Now she went further. She began to compose a series of Marathi Text Books for girls. Then, she wrote her well-known book, "The High Caste Hindu Woman", wherein she spoke of the evils of Hindu social life, such as the ignorance of the women of India, child-marriage, the joint-family system, and the non-marriage of Hindu widows. To this book, a preface was written by Dr. Bodley, where was related in sympathetic terms the life of Anandabai Joshi, with the history of Ramabai herself and an appeal for help for a home of study for young widows

in India. This work, by which Dr. Bodley declared "that the silence of a thousand years had been broken," won many adherents for Ramabai, chiefly among those who had worked against slavery and in the Women's Christian Temperance Union. In 1887, a tentative committee of women was formed to consider Ramabai's plans; a few months later this committee presented its report; and an Association was organised, called the Ramabai Association. It was a very unsectarian one, in as much as its Vice-President, Trustees and Executive Committee came from different denominations. Its headquarters were in Boston, and it had "circles all over the country" whose members took an agreement to contribute a certain sum for ten years for the support of a High Caste Widows' Home in India. Ramabai was so overwhelmed with pleasure at the forming of this Association, that we are told, she sobbed for very happiness. "I am crying for joy", she said, "that my dream of years has become a reality."

In 1888, she travelled from Philadelphia to San Francisco and other important places,

speaking about her pet scheme. She was made so happy by her American friends that, when she left for India, she felt as if she were going to a strange country and to a strange people.

The news of Ramabai's return caused a good deal of excitement in Bombay. As we have seen, she had created a small sensation before she had left for America; and now the rumour preceded her that she was intending to open an educational home for Indian Women. Sure enough when Ramabai reached Bombay, the first thing she did was to open the "Sharada Sadan" or "Home of Learning." She received her greatest support from the Brahmo Samaj, which formed a sort of half-way house between Christianity and Hinduism. The Brahmos, being fairly liberal-minded, sent their daughters to the Sharada Sadan. In 1890, this school was removed to Poona and established in a fine bungalow with a large compound. Pupils began to come in. A great impetus to Ramabai's work was given when Miss Sundarabai H. Powar, who had been doing missionary work in Bombay, left the mission,

and joined Ramabai as her helper. In 1892, when the inmates had increased to 40, the Home was finally opened.

One can safely say that Ramabai kept four ideals before her at the beginning. In the first place, she wished to develop her pupils into useful members of society, and not into mere bookworms, and so she trained them to be teachers, housekeepers, nurses, wives and mothers. In the second place, she wished to keep her pupils Indian and not Anglicize them. She desired them not to practice Western ideals of life, but the old simple customs of food, dress and life. In the third place, she wished the institution to be a real home for girls. The teaching staff was treated more or less on the same level as the "pupils". "I wish them to become acquainted with as many good people as possible; to learn what the outside world is like from pictures and books and to enjoy the wonderful works of God as they ramble in the garden, study with the microscope, or view the heavens from the veranda on the roof". The result, therefore, was a close bond between

Ramabai and her pupils, a sweet motherly love and care on one side and a touching devotion and gratitude on the other.

Finally Ramabai wished to steer a neutral line in the religious teaching of her home. She liked Missions and missionary work. As she said :—

"Missionaries are showing by their Precepts and example that Christianity does not mean going into other countries and taking possession of them putting taxes upon the people, introducing the liquor traffic, and gaining a great deal of revenue from the infamous traffics in rum and opium. As their numbers multiply they are gaining a foothold in the country, and also commanding the love and respect of the people by their earnestness in missionary work. And finally, the blessed Gospel will be everywhere preached by the missionaries; and I hope some day we shall owe to their labours and their prayers a great army of Christian apostles among our people, who will eventually regenerate the whole Hindu nation through their lives and their teachings".

But she felt that at that time when the Hindus were all against Christianity, it was not possible to reach them through missionary methods. She was sure that her own methods would prepare the way for the work of missionaries. She said;

"We give them (the pupils) all liberty to keep their caste and customs, and we have made all arrangements for it They are not prevented from praying to their own Gods, nor from wearing those

Gods round their necks, if they want to; and some girls in my school do so, as I used to years ago. Do you think I have gone against the religion of the girls? No, not in any way. I have not taught the girls any religious system. If they wanted any religious training, they might go out of the school to the missionary, or to the Hindu teacher. But I am glad to say that some light came to them, not from ourselves, but from God. If the widows and ignorant women of India were made independent in spirit, they would surely and naturally adopt Christianity as she had done. "Christ", argued Rambai, "came to give different gifts to different people; some He made prophets; some He made preachers; some He made teachers. Since I have become a Christian, I have, thought He has given me the gift of being a sweeper. I want to sweep away some of the old difficulties that lie before the missionaries in their efforts to reach our Hindu widows.

But she herself did not hide the fact that she was a Christian. Her little daughter, aged eight, constantly affirmed that she was a Christian and that the Bible was her Shastra. Ramabai herself held family worship in her own rooms with her daughter and a few Christian friends. The door was left open, and the Hindu pupils were free to come in and go out, and gradually many of them fell into the habit of attending daily worship, joining in the prayers, and kneeling when the Christians knelt. The Bible was placed among the other books in the library. All this brought a great reaction against Ramabai. It was rumoured

that contrary to her promise, she was teaching Christianity to her pupils. Much abuse and criticism followed and pupils fell away. But Ramabai, strong in her convictions, firmly averred that she was free to act as a Christian in her own house. Soon, the Christian spirit began to work. Several of the girls, who had no Hindu relatives alive, professed themselves Christians, and in 1896, fifteen of them were with Ramabai at a Christian camp meeting at Lanouli.

Between 1896 and 1897, the great famine of India reached its culmination, and Ramabai was able to do much relief work. She undertook trips to the famine-stricken parts of not only the Bombay Presidency but of the Central Provinces as well. She visited poor houses and relief-camps, travelled in jungles and wildernesses, and snatched hundreds and hundreds of widows and girls from the jaws of death.

It was fully a work of faith. Ramabai had only a few rupees in hand, and the money from America was, owing to several reasons, often delayed sometimes decreased. But

Ramabai prayed in unquestioning hope, and soon remittances poured in from all sides. The work increased by leaps and bounds. After first getting together sixty girls and women, Ramabai returned to Poona for three days. Then she started again for the Central Provinces. Her heart ached with grief for the girls :

> Ever since I have seen these girls in the famine districts some fallen into the hands of wicked people ; some ruined for life and turned out by their cruel masters owing to bad diseases, to die a miserable death in a hopeless, helpless manner ; some being treated in the hospitals, only to be taken back into the pits of sin, there to await a cruel death ; some bearing the burdens of sin, utterly lost to the sense of shame and humanity ; hell has become a horrible reality to me, and my heart is bleeding for those daughters of fond parents, who have died leaving them orphans. Who with a mother's heart and a sister's love can rest without doing everything in her power to save at least a few of the girls who can yet be saved from the hands of the evil ones ?

Ramabai was soon called back to Poona, because the plague had broken out there. The Government ordered that no more inmates should be sent to the Sharada Sadan. Then Ramabai began her work of organisation. She hired a dozen tents and sent an establishment into the open country twenty miles away, while she herself stayed in Poona. Some time

before that, she had purchased a piece of land at Khedgaon, and planted it with useful crops and fruit trees, the produce from which she hoped would yield a good income a few years later. Now, in her dilemma, she thought of the farm. Grass huts and a large barn were erected, and a number of people were sent there. The work of rescue, therefore, went on in quite an efficient manner. Ramabai got together from five hundred to six hundred starving women and children ; keeping about three hundred for herself, she passed on the rest to different Mission institutions. She gave the name of Mukti to the home. She started various departments for her rescued people, such as painting, weaving, basket-making, and she organised a children's school and a home for the deformed and mentally afflicted.

In 1898 the ten years of help from the American circles came to an end ; and Ramabai received an urgent invitation to go to America to renew the Association. She had by that time secured the help of Miss Abrams, a good missionary of the Methodist Episcopal

Church. With her, therefore, at Mukti, Miss Sundarabai Powar in the Sharada Shadan and Gadre, an educated Brahman convert, as chief steward, Ramabai felt free to go to America. She had in 1897 sent three bright girls to America for further education. Now, she took with her two other girls. Those five girls were given a home with Mrs. Roberts, Principal of the A. M. Chesbrough Seminary, North Chili. The education of her own daughter Manorama, had been provided for by a good Christian lady in America. After eighteen months in England, Manorama joined her mother on the way to America, and was also left in the care of Mrs. Roberts.

Ramabai found her efforts crowned with success in America. The old executive committee of the Ramabai Association was dissolved, after giving a vote of the utmost confidence in the Pandita and her work. A new committee was formed, which promised to support the Sharada Shadan as before, but with no time-limit, and also to help in the work at Mukti. Out of the money sent in former years by the Association, Ramabai had used some

to buy a good deal of property. Now this property was transferred to the care of Ramabai.

Partly from anxiety, partly from weariness, Ramabai had fallen ill in America. When she recovered, she went on a visit to England, with the hope of forming an English Association to assist her, but she met with no success. After visiting the Keswick Convention with great joy, she returned home. Before leaving for America, she had furnished new plans for a new building at Mukti; and on her return, the building which had been completed, was dedicated to God's service. This is what Mrs. Dyer wrote of the institution:

"In January 1889, my husband and I paid a farewell visit to Khedgaon before leaving India. We found the work going on most satisfactorily, and a number of industries in full swing. Those industries were chiefly of an agricultural nature, preparing food-stuffs for consumption at Mukti, and the Shareda Shadan, and thus reducing materially the expenditure of both establishments. The dairy department provided all the milk, butter, and ghee, for both institutions. A gift of fifty pounds sent to Ramabai by a lady in England, instead of a legacy, had then recently enabled her to enlarge this department of the work by the purchase of more cows; and while in America the Previous year a wealthy American friend had given her some American churns and other improved dairy appliance, including some very nicely-contrived cans, in which milk was daily sent by rail to Poona. We went to see the cows, a number of which had young

calves. Ramabai was then anticipating the increase of this department into a regular business of supplying dairy produce to customers in Poona; but the subsequent famine made it very difficult to maintain the cattle, and all the milk and ghee obtainable were needed to sustain and succour the famine victims. A deaf and dumb woman was in charge of the churning department, and eagerly displayed to us the superiority of the new churns over the previously employed native methods."

About this time, Mr. and Mrs. Norton and Mrs. Baker, three missionaries from America, came to Mukti; and through their help Ramabai was able to carry out a long-cherished scheme into effect. Her heart had long ached over the poor girls' who had been sinned against by the world. Now she started a rescue home for them, and secured for her first superintendent, Miss Edmunds, who had been in charge of a similar home in America. When the girls increased to twenty, she set apart for the site of the home, a large plot she had purchased sometime ago near the Mukti property. Before Miss Baker left, the foundation stone was laid; and when Mrs. Baker went to America, she was able to get the money for the completion of the home, which was filled in three years with three hundred inmates. This home was called the Kripa Sadan.

Christian conversion was progressing apace in the homes. In 1898 a mission band of 35 was formed at Mukti under Miss Abrams, on the basis of the Student Volunteer movement. Ramabai's influence was also felt in several other ways. For instance, she was able to arrange that no liquor should be sold at Khedgaon.

In 1900 came another great famine in North India, and again Ramabai helped greatly. Here is what she wrote about it :

"In August, 1899, famine was officially declared; the wells dried up, the fruit trees planted round them withered away, the cattle yielded so little milk that it could only be provided for the babies, as there was no grass, and vegetables were an impossibility. One morning nearly two hundred starving people came into our compound as I went out early to see what could be done to save the dying fruit trees. The people literally besieged me; the women took hold of my hand and begged for work. I was so overcome by this sight that I could only say a few words to comfort them, and invited them to come to our barn and join in prayer to God for the salvation of their souls and bodies. All followed me silently and sat down in as orderly and reverent a manner as any Christian congregation to hear the Gospel and to ask God for rain and food. All heard the glad tidings of a Saviour's love, and of God the Father of us all, who is ever ready to hear and answer prayer.

Sixty were employed at once, and others told to come later on as there was no work for them this week. Some went away disappointed, others sat around as if determined never to leave the premises.

till they got work. Little boys and girls spoke in such a piteous manner that I could not but promise to employ them all. But they would not leave till all their names were written on the roll, and they got a positive promise of employment next week."

Ramabai took in about 1,500 girls from Gujerat, Rajaputana and other countries round about, besides sending many to mission orphanages. A normal school of 50 for training teachers was organised among the girls, 50 new classes were opened; and the kindergarten section took in 400. Thus, all were soon busy, half a day in the Industrial department and the rest of the time at their books. The garden and fields, the oil press and dairy, the laundry and bakery, the making of plain Indian garments, caps, lace, buttons, ropes, brooms and baskets, the spinning of wool and cotton, the weaving of blankets, rugs and sarees and other cloth, embroidery and various sorts of fancy work, thread winding, grain parching, tinning of cooking vessels, and lastly a printing press, furnished employment suited to all capacities.

By 1900 the schools had grown into great institutions. 580 in the Mukti Sadan, 60 in the Kripa Sadan and 100 in the Sharada Sadan

were under training. 16 paid teachers came from outside to teach and there were 85 others to help. Most of the latter received only a normal pay, but obtained their boarding and lodging from the schools.

It is pleasant to note the results. 70 teachers and workers were produced in eleven years from the Sharada Sadan, and 80 from Mukti learnt to earn their living during the past three years. 85 of these two sets found work in the institutions themselves and 65 of the old girls were either married or became teachers and workers in outside places.

In 1900 Manorama Bai returned from America after finishing her higher school course. She had hoped to return to America to take her, B.A. but had never found the time for it. Instead, she graduated at the Bombay University in 1917. She became Principal of the High School of Sharada Sadan, which was removed to Khedgaon. Sundara Bai Powar left the work about this time, in order to join another work where her presence seemed more necessary.

In 1902, a boys' orphanage had been opened at Dhond by Mrs. Norton with special Industries for them. Zenana work was also started, and soon was in full swing. About 1903, a magazine called the MUKTI PRAYER BELL was started. In 1912 by special request a school was opened by Manorama at Gulburgh and placed on a Christian basis.

The church at Mukti did not belong to any special denomination. Eventually, it was left in the charge of the Rev. W. Robbins of Poona. A foreign mission was opened and the first meeting was held at Mukti one Easter Sunday. Some money was sent to the China Inland Mission, some to Armenia; a great deal to other missions in India. In 1902, a system of prayers circles was introduced, through which each member of all the institutions was remembered in prayer daily by name, by friends all over the world. Indeed, Ramabai believed much in the power of prayer. In 1903, Manaroma and Miss Abrams were sent to take part in the Australian revival. The Welsh revival was also encouraging, and in

1905 a new Prayer circle was opened at Mukti to pray for the revival in India.

Pandita Ramabai who has been called the Moses of her people spent fourteen years in a translation of the New Testament into the simplest Marathi, as far as the Acts of the Apostles. It was published in 1912 and about it was written thus : " Many in Western India will feel deeply indebted to Pandita Ramabai for her simple, yet beautiful, translation of the New Testament." Many papers of tracts and gospels were printed at, and distributed from, Mukti. In 1918, Ramabai printed 23,000 copies of a Life of Christ in Marathi. She also wrote a Marathi cookery book, with the Gospel portion printed on the back of each simple recipe.

The expenses of Mukti were very heavy, but were not felt as a burden even during the great War and so the work went on. One almost holds one's breath, wrote a visitor at the magnitude of this work, " going on in every department without hitch, and then to realise that the human head of this huge enterprise is just this most wonderful woman, Ramabai.

My heart rejoices as I see what God is doing through one of India's daughters."

The Secret of Ramabai's power, as we have said before, was her immense faith. Great were her financial trials, but prayer was offered always and in many instances relief came.

After the girls from the Gujarathi famine had got settled into the institution, Rambai put all the surplus funds into buildings, to meet the requirements of the enlarged family. For some time, funds came in sufficient amounts to continue the building, but then came a time when money again became scarce, and the strain of living from hand to mouth, and buying supplies in small quantities, and doing without many things that were needed became very wearisome. Among the cold weather visitors to India that year, was a Gospel Minister, carrying on a large work in London, who was interested more than most in foreign missions. He came to Mukti and saw the work with which he was much impressed. This friend was both able and willing to relieve the most pressing needs, and after his return to England, he so pleaded for Ramabai's work

that one wealthy friend sent money enough for all the clothes needed, and funds for current expenses were sent in sufficient amounts to relieve anxiety.

It is pleasant to hear of the force of Ramabai's personality from one of her close friends.

"The chief characteristics of her life were her noble, dignified and commanding personality, her wonderful administrative capacity, her exceptionally loving, sympathetic and generous nature, her great spirituality and deep humility, her immense mountain-moving faith, her strength of character, and quiet, winning, humorous ways, and above all her great passion for winning souls. In spite of the innumerable demands upon her time and attention, she always found time to show her love and friendship for the little children who crowded round her, the weak and disabled and mentally defective whom she considered her friends, as well as for the birds, cattle and other animals, which she called each one by name, and fed with her own hands. On special occasions such as Durbar Day, she held feasts for these her favourites, when delicacies were distributed both among the children as well as the dumb birds and beasts. The feeding of her birds and cats was her favourite recreation after the day's work. But the greatest feature of her character was her Himalyan faith in the Heavenly Father, which was sustained by her unceasing, prayerful spirit. Besides stated times of prayer and meditation her whole life was a prayerful one, and herein lay the whole secret of her great success. Prayer was the power which worked her great institution. The word of God was her ever abiding strength."

RAJAH SIR HARNAM SINGH.

RAJAH SIR HARNAM SINGH.

ENGLAND'S best assets in the past under the operation of the Law of Primogeniture have been the younger sons of noble families. With traditions, atmosphere, education and culture, open to the scions of great and historic houses, which would or should enable them to attain any height, their prospects in life have been disproportionately limited. But their outlook of life has not been so restricted. On the other hand, the incentive for work has been proportionately larger and the result sometimes admirable.

There is in India no lack of houses and families in which the circumscribing limitations of what would correspond to the Law of Primogeniture, operate prejudicially to the prospects of younger

* The writer of this sketch has drawn largely from a contribution to the INDIAN REVIEW by Dr. Sir Debiprasad Sarvadhicari.

sons. But the counterbalancing good fortune of England is sadly lacking here. The law of compensation is not in full operation. Otherwise, there would have been a stronghold of culture and worth, as the background and support not merely of every such family and house but of the country, the value of which it would be impossible to over-estimate. Look around as carefully as we may, the vista is indeed depressing and poor, as any Indian State and any house governed by the Law of Primogeniture would prove. The means of education of our Ruling Princes are far from ideal and the education of the younger members of their families, with no large roseate prospects before them, is poorer still. Their education, however, ought to be the prime care of the Government of India and is no less a matter of anxiety to the people from the larger political point of view.

A SCION OF THE HOUSE OF KAPURTHALA

There are, however, notable exceptions to the general prevalence of neglect and disappointment in these directions. One of the most notable is the case of Raja Sir Harnam Singh

Ahluwalia, K.C.I.E.—a distinguished son of the Kapurthala ruling family.

'His name stands foremost among the pious and pure Christians whose change of religion is due to a deep sense of spiritual conviction. Rajah Sir Harnam Singh literally gave up his earthly kingdom for the Heavenly, for he was born heir presumptive of the Kapurthala Sikh State. He was born on the 15th of November 1851, and was the second son of His Highness Rajah-i-Rajgan Sir Randhir Singh Bahadur, G. C. S. I., the Kunwar Sahib. His brother, Tikka Sahib Kharak Singh, came to the Kapurthala Throne in 1870, and if he had died sonless, Prince Harnam Singh had the assurance of coming to the Throne. But the Prince, having weighed earthly pre-eminence with membership in the Kingdom of Christ, chose the latter and forsook all for Christ.

EARLY STRUGGLES

He is thus an entirely self-educated and wholly self-made man, and life's early handicap not only did not daunt him but really served to inspire him. It en-

couraged him and made him exert himself all the more. In fact, his early life was full of hard struggles, and he had many enemies. His knowledge of Christianity was first gained through the Rev. J. S. Woodside of the American Presbyterian Mission when he was but 9 years old, under whose tuition he was placed. He was but four years under his tuition, yet his mind was saturated with the truths of Christianity, and in 1872, two years after the accession of his brother, he left the State, and he went to Jullunder where the late Rev. Golaknath was labouring, and, under his instructions, decided to accept Christianity, and was baptized by Mr. Golaknath in 1874, and afterwards married Mr. Golaknath's youngest daughter. He thus cut himself off entirely from the State. He was busy for some time in acquiring a knowledge especially of English, although he was well up in Persian and in Punjabi, his own vernacular. He now speaks English faultlessly. SirHarnam Singh, while changing his faith, did not change his costume but as far as his culture and enlightenment go, he has few equals and fewer superiors.

His brother died within seven years of his accession, and, in 1877, the Government of Punjab appointed him Manager of the Oudh Estates which are more valuable than the State of Kapurthala. Prince Harnam Singh remained in this position for 18 years, and, under his management, the Estates made great progress, and the income was more than doubled. He established schools and dispensaries for the people. While thus engaged, the Prince was Honorary Secretary to the Hemp Drugs Commission during 1893-99, and did invaluable work. He was also an Honorary Magistrate and has long been a Fellow of the Punjab University. He served also as a nominated Additional Member of the Imperial and the Punjab Legislative Councils, and showed much independence in the Council-debates and had even opposed "the Land Alienation Bill." In this connection, he pointed out in one of his speeches that the measure, if passed, would result in the bigger fishes swallowing up the smaller ones. His prophecy has evidently turned out to be true as is now generally acknowledged both by the Press and

the People of the Punjab. He has also served on some official Committees of investigation, always rendering valuable help.

A NOBLE PATERFAMILIAS

Sir Harnam Singh was invited to be present in England at King Edward's Coronation. He was knighted in 1899, and the title of Rajah was conferred on him in 1907, which was later made hereditary. He is now honoured by the Sikhs and orthodox Hindus alike, who esteem him for his gentlemanliness and saintly character. His wife, who died last year, was a faithful friend and comforter to him, and a helpful adviser. She was gentle-mannered and one of the best educated women in India. Her philanthropy and sympathy went hand in hand, and she spent much of her time and money for charitable works. She rendered valuable help in starting the Dufferin Fund.

Sir Harnam Singh was blessed with seven sons and one daughter, and all are living except a son. He has given excellent education to them, all of whom have been educated in England.

SIR HARNAM'S SONS

The Raja Sahib's eldest son, Kunwar Raghbir Singh, O. B. E., is a member of the Punjab Commission and is now Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana. The second son, Kunwar Maharaj Singh, C. I. E., who is a distinguished District Officer in the U. P., and has been a Deputy Secretary in the Educational Department of the Government of India, was selected some time back to make some delicate and important enquiries about Indian labour conditions abroad, particularly in Mauritius and Guiana upon which largely depends the future of Indian Labour Emigration. Recently he acted as Commissioner of Allahabad. The third son, Lt-Col. Kunwar Shumshere Singh, is a member of the Indian Medical Service and is the Civil Surgeon of Rawalpindi, Jullandur. The fourth son, Kunwar Dalip Singh, is a well-known Barrister in Lahore, and is now acting as a Judge of the Punjab High Court. The youngest son, Kunwar Jasbir Singh, holds the responsible position of Special Manager in the very important Estate of Balrampur in Oudh. One of

his sons, Captain Kunwar Indarjit Singh, gave his life in the Service of his King and Country on the fields of France in the Great War. The only daughter, Rajkumari Bibi Amrit Kaur, is an accomplished lady, who would be the pride of any family and would adorn any society.

A CAREER OF SERVICE AND HONOUR

"I have attained the age of more than three score years and ten, and now I wish to die in peace" is the Raja Sahib's ever recurring theme, and he has no personal ambition or thought of individual advancement. All that come to him receive his help and advice; and many from all parts of the country throng to him, confide in him, and return reassured and helped. He knows the Punjab and the Province of Oudh, and has more than a nodding acquaintance with Bengal, Bombay, Madras and the Central Provinces; the only Provinces of which he does not personally know much are Assam and Burma. The Raja Sahib has known, in some cases intimately, all the Viceroys from Lord Canning downward, all the Lieut.-Governors in the Provinces of the Punjab and

the United Provinces during the last fifty years and all the Commanders-in-Chief, Members of Executive Councils and Secretaries in Northern India and many other notables besides. His intimacy with the Indian Chiefs and Princes and their advisers and friends has been singular, and if only he would consent to break his silence or at all events record for future use his reminiscences, great indeed would be posterity's benefit. They would be useful to the historian. He has been to Europe on several occasions, and has had the honour of being received in audience by the late Queen-Empress Victoria, the late King-Emperor Edward VII and the present King Emperor and the Prince of Wales. So he has seen and known four generations of the Sovereigns of India.

A God-Fearing Christian

A good God-fearing Christian, with unlimited tolerance for other faiths and creeds which he knows at close quarters, his piety is deep but unostentatious as are indeed his charity and abiding sympathy with all good deeds. A genuine sense of joy lightens

up his face and a cheery smile that slowly spreads greets all that come near, gives re-assurance and makes them feel at home. But injustice and tyranny and any approach to them would make him flare up and the wicked and wrong-doer would have no escape from his displeasure. A man among men anywhere, he attracts attention in his striking Oriental garb, with his spotless Pugree, always in position. Change of faith and free-mixing with Europeans and Anglicised society has not led to a change of dress, manners or habits, which are the simplest imaginable. His houses at Simla and in Jullundur (Punjab), are delightfully well-appointed and perfectly cosmopolitan in taste. The Raja Sahib is one of the oldest residents of Simla. His residence, "The Manor", was designed and constructed by himself forty years ago, and his orchard and fruit-garden are one of the most attractive in that quiet and salubrious locality of Simla.

A FULL CAREER

Much of the Raja Sahib's early time was spent at Lucknow in improving and managing the Oudh Estate of the Kapur-

thala State during the present ruler's minority. The tale of his stewardship was graphically told in the *Pioneer* a quarter of a century ago, and people, who are almost forgetting it, might well recall it to mind. After the Sepoy War, the aid of Sikh rulers and Bengali educationists was called into requisition for pacifying Oudh, thanks to Lord Canning's far-seeing policy. The influence for good in the Kapurthala State was great. And young Kunwar Harnam Singh, as he then was, maintained and increased this influence during his managership of the Kapurthala Oudh Estate. He was worthily seconded by influences represented by Raja Dakshina Ranjan Mookerjee, and Rai Bahadur Prof. Raj Kunwar Sarvadhikary. The Canning College, the Talukdars' Association, the British Indian Association of Lucknow, the *Lucknow Times*, and the *Lucknow Express*, as they came in the wake, added to such influence and the turbulent Oudh barons in turn became England's firm friends. Much of the credit for the work is undoubtedly Kunwar Harnam Singh's who-

has for over forty years been First Honorary Secretary and later, Honorary Life Secretary of the British Indian Association. Fitting is it indeed that his son, Kunwar Maharaj Singh, should now be serving the U. P. Government as an acting Commissioner while another son of his, Kunwar Jasbir Singh, should be loyally serving the ancient house of Balrampur.

It is a pity and an irony of fate, that the Raja Sahib's vast and varied experience is not more utilised in the Councils of the Empire. In the *Pioneer's* words in 1900, the eyes of the Indian world were turned to the indomitable Raja Harnam Singh when the Punjab Land Alienation Bill was having its passage through the then Imperial Council of India. There was a time, when, under favourable circumstances, the Raja Sahib might have put through his pet Railway Scheme in the Doab, but for vested interests standing in the way. And though years have gone by, it still requires taking up.

THE RAJAH IN THE COUNCIL OF STATE

He has been doing his duty loyally and steadily in the Council of State

for India, where it is a pleasure to meet him as a colleague. Though he does not talk much, he advises a great deal. He serves well indeed, though seemingly he but stands and waits. In spite of his early change of faith, he is a good and stalwart Khalsa Sikh at heart.

How high the house of Sir Harnam Singh is held in official esteem will be demonstrated by H. E. Sir Edward Maclagan accompanied by Field Marshal Sir William Birdwood paying a farewell personal visit to the Rani Sahiba at 'The Manor' and by his stopping his special rail motor car at the Summer Hill Railway Station on the day of his departare from Simla, in order to spare the Raja Sahib the trouble of having to undertake the long journey to Barnes Court and to let him bid good-bye to the Punjab Governor, near his own home. It was a singular honour indeed, that was highly appreciated, though there was no newspaper boom about it.

TYPE OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHARACTER

His flower-garden, his orchard, his books, his guests, his friends, his faith, his charity and his trusts take up much of his time, and his

worthy and devoted lady willingly and cheerfully seconded his efforts in all and every one of these directions. The Raja Sahib's Educational Trust has been a relief to many indigent students, and enabled them to prosecute their studies. His recent endowment of about Rs. 80,000 in memory of his son Capt. Kanwar Indarjit, I. M. S., M. C. towards the cause of medical research shows his keenness in all matters affecting the country's good. He is studiously punctilious in the slightest concerns of life, is courtesy personified even in the smallest details to the extent of insisting on seeing his guest to his room, every night, after his long and informing after-dinner talks, no matter how many nights it might be. Methodical and business-like in all that he undertakes, not a paper on his table nor a book on his shelves would be allowed to be out of place and the smallest of specks would attract his attention. His figure that well bears the burden of years and cares, would willingly take up any other rightful burden even in the even tide of life,

burdens that the services of God or man might require. It is a mellowed sunset, almost Turneresque in its richness. In Sir Harinam Singh's life, we have the best specimen of Christian life and character, proving the power of Christianity. He, apart from his station in life, has enthroned himself in the hearts of the people to whom he is a faithful friend, and really a king of their hearts, though not a temporal ruler. He stands out as a noble example of what a Christian should be, despite his position in the world. Cheerfully, withal, is he ready to lay down all burden, at the appointed hour uncomplainingly, for his never-ending and none too pessimistic theme is "Let me depart in peace." May such departure be deferred ever so long, for men like the Hon'ble Raja Sir Harnam Singh can be ill-spared by his country, his friends and his Government at this juncture.

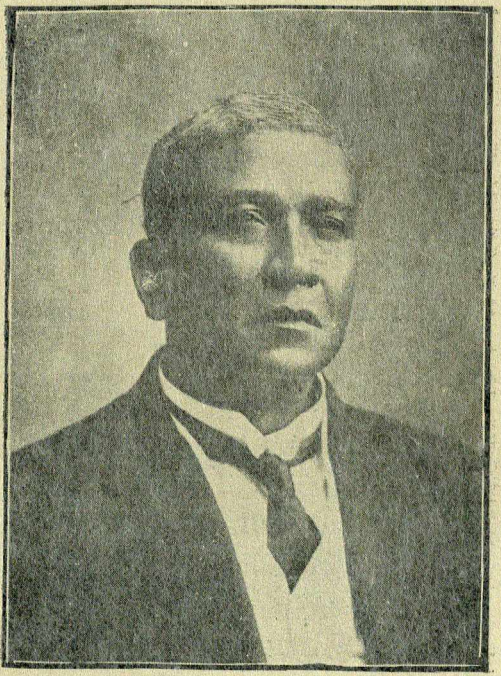
L. D. SWAMIKANNU PILLAI.

Seek we sepulture,
On a tall mountain, cited on the top,
Crowded with culture.

Browning.

Dewan Bahadur L. D. Swamikannu Pillai* was born into a period of stirring events. During more than half a century, new forces brought change into the changeless East. Young Indians breathed a new atmosphere intellectually and spiritually. They came under a new stimulus, compounded of many elements, each of them new and inspiring. To that stimulus must be attributed the sudden upward growth in politics, education and social life. Unfortunately, the mighty movement of the 'Indian Renaissance' has taken a political turn which may retard the full realization of the achievements it was destined to produce. On the whole, it must be admitted, science and

*Sketch prepared by Rev. L. Proserpio, S. J, M. A., Principal, St. Aloysius' College, Mangalore.



L. D. SWAMIKANNU PILLAI.

literature, arts and industries, have been less productive than politics. The period has had its great men, too. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the founder of the 'Servants of India', and, perhaps, the best constructive statesman comes first to the mind. To him must be added Dr. Bhandarkar, famous educationist and Sanskrit scholar; Romesh Chandra Dutt, Indian Historian; Rabindranath Tagore, the poet of world-wide renown; Sir J. C. Bose, the international scientist; Mahatma Gandhi, the reformer who has staked his fame and the triumph of his cause upon 'satyagraha' and 'charka,' non-co-operation and the spinning-wheel.

Dewan Bahadur Swamikannu Pillai, though great, has no such title to fame as has any one of these. He was no poet or scientist of the first class, no leader in state-craft; he headed no political or religious movement. In brief, he was no hero in the accepted sense of the word.

The days of hero-worship died with Carlyle's apotheosis of the hero. Yet the term has been coupled with the name of Swami-

kannu Pillai by many friends and admirers, standing by his remains before they were lowered into the grave. From a Memoir aiming at offering a disinterested appreciation of his life and character, even the appearance of exaggeration must be eschewed. All the same, it may be affirmed that, though no hero, he had the stuff of which heroes are made. Was he, like Browning's Grammarian, a 'high man aiming at a million,' and, in the attempt, missing 'an unit'? Time is the best historian: no one is entitled to forestall its final verdict on the abiding value of the services rendered by Dewan Bahadur Swamikannu Pillai to his country. The history of Indian Chronology and the Annals of the Legislative Council of the Madras Presidency of which he was the first Secretary, the second nominated and the first elected President, when they come to be written, will look incomplete and poor without a chapter dedicated to his name. More than this, his figure stands out prominent in the golden leaves of the 'Book of Life,' which Angels keep and which none but the best of us may read. If he failed to achieve greater

things it was not for lack of genius within, but because of the external circumstances of birth and religion which, from the very outset, prescribed boundaries to the possibilities of the part he was destined to play.

For, in his case, it cannot be too much emphasised that he came of humble parentage Despite his many lucrative appointments in after years, which sheer want almost forced him to court, and despite the simplicity of his manner of life, poverty continued in a way, to dog his career throughout. In a letter to a friend, dated 24th December 1923, he writes :

> "I am frightened to think I am running so fearfully in debt with you. Besides the Rs. 100 which I hope to pay in January and in February, I hope to pay Rs. 500 in March out of my pay (it is only Rs. 2,000 against Rs. 1,500 which I now draw). My February increment goes to X".

And likewise, a large share of the remaining money went, each month, to the many relations who depended on him

In the light of the above letter, it is pathetic to read the following lines, the last he wrote on the 30th of July, 1925, to his Spiritual Director: '…This morning a curious reflection occurred to me. I am perturbed in mind because my family is not well provided for. But I know as a matter of Faith that after death I shall be perfectly satisfied with God's actual disposal of my family.' He never enjoyed the leisure, '*otium cum dignitate*,' necessary for the highest achievements. From humble official beginnings he climbed in fact to all but the loftiest rung of the ladder of office. Yet no one will deny that to be a Catholic, in a country like India, is no recommendation to preferment. If he rose high, his success was entirely the outcome of personal effort. As the late President of the Legislative Council, the Hon'ble Mr. M. Ruthnaswami, M.L.A., put it, L. D. Swamikannu Pillai "like Burke could say he was not cradled and dandled into office. He was challenged at every step and had to produce the passport of his efficient and hard work, before he was allowed to pass on."

BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE

Louis Dominic Swamikannu Pillai was born on the 11th of February 1865 at Madras*. His parents, like those of other celebrated men, were poor. Mr. Louis Pillai, his father, hailed from Somanoor. In early youth he had been a student of the Seminary at Pondicherry, but was compelled to abandon the ecclesiastical career on account of the straitened circumstances of his family, and in 1856, he settled down in his native village as a clerk under Mr. Cherry, a Forest Officer, in the Taluk Cutcherry. With a view to enhancing his small earnings, he undertook to teach French to the children of some European settlers in those parts. At this time, he seems to have fallen under Protestant influence. He found his way to Madras where, after a period of theological training, he worked, between the years 1861—1866, with the Rev. Mr. Simpson who was in charge of the Sylvan Garden, Royapettah.

Though born of Catholic parents, Swamikannu was baptized in the Protestant Church, through the exertions of

Mr. N. Subramanian, a former Administrator-General of Madras and a devout Protestant. In vain were the protests of the mother, unwilling to see any of her children brought up outside the Catholic Faith. She, in the end, wrote to her brother-in-law, the Rev. Fr. Aloysius of Coimbatore, acquainting him with all the circumstances of the event. The priest came to Madras and succeeded in having the boy then one year and a half old, baptized again in St. Peter's Church, Royapuram.. In 1870, the family, consisting of the father, mother, two sons and a daughter left Madras for good and returned to their native village. Mr. Louis Pillai was first employed for a short time at Podanur; he, later, moved on with the children to Ootacamund and was entertained as a low-paid teacher in the Breeks' Memorial School in that town. Young Dominic was sent to learn the three R's in the Catholic parochial school managed by the Rev. C. Biolley, a venerable priest now nearly ninety years old. Let us, in passing, pay a tribute of love, may be the only one recorded in print, to this dear veteran

soldier, who spent the best and longest portion of his days in the mission field without once revisiting France, his beloved country. We do it the more willingly because there is reason to believe that Fr. Biolley took a special interest in young Swamikannu and recommended him and his brother to the Jesuits at Negapatam on the East Coast. The two boys travelled from Ootacamund to Coimbatore on foot—there was no railway in the early seventies—and the story goes that the amusement of rolling limes along the road helped them to walk the long distances. They joined St. Joseph's College at the beginning of 1874, and Swamikannu was placed in the Second Class, corresponding to the Second Form of the present system of education. It is here that the nine-year lad began to lay the foundation of that deep scholarship for which he has been deservedly praised. There was nothing very remarkable in his outward appearance. One of his teachers has left a description of him at this period. " He was not a very big man then, a sprightly little boy, with a pair of

sparkling eyes, full of life and cheerfulness, who had already contracted the inveterate habit of being, though the smallest of the lot, the first boy of his class."

From the first, two influences were at work in moulding his intellect and character. He felt the strength of the classical tradition built up by such humanists as were the Jesuit Fathers at St. Joseph's. The names of Fr. Bruni, Dr. Barrow, Fr. Gallo and Frs. Abreu and Bangar were often on his lips in after life. To this list must be added the name of the late Fr. Jean, one of the most enthusiastic Latin scholars of the day. As Rector of the College, Fr. Jean came in contact with the young student, was struck by his extraordinary mental gifts and greatly encouraged him in the study of Latin. He seems to have contributed the largest share to the boy's intellectual development, so much so that, despite all the honours heaped upon Swamikannu Pillai in mature life, he continued to pride himself on having been the disciple and the intimate friend of the Rev. Fr. A. Jean. The other influence, altogether spiritual, was

derived from his bond of union with the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin of which he became from the start a junior member, and with its Director, the Rev. Fr. Eyraud. For, it must be borne in mind, that no appreciation of Mr. Swamikannu Pillai can be complete, if it neglects to take stock of the spiritual aspect of his life. Intellect and religion are the two pillars on which rested the structure of his future greatness.

The Jesuits were quick to realize that young Swamikannu was not to be ranked with the average boys one meets at College and that, even thus early, he was a coming man. His splendid abilities made an impression also on his fellow-students. He was the quickest learner ever seen at the School, and this, coupled with the fact that he had already received from his father a good grounding in Latin and French, made him often the centre of wonder and admiration. He was full of life and heartiness withal, of fun and frolic, the pleasantest comrade whose company was much sought after by everyone.

In those early days of St. Joseph's at Negapatam, the Fathers used to hold school 'concertations'. Each class was divided into two rival camps, say the Romans and the Carthaginians, with the two best boys as their respective leaders. Every now and then, a subject for concertation was chosen beforehand, and on an appointed day, the staff and the students of the institution assembled in the big Hall to witness the intellectual match. Little Swamikannu Pillai was at home in such contests. He had a perfect mastery of the Latin grammar, its declensions, pronouns, irregular verbs, its higher idiomatic elegances, and it was a pleasure to see him unravel difficult questions put to him by bigger boys and come off victorious from the ordeal. Nowadays, the century-old 'camp system,' is held to be quite out-of-date, yet we may be permitted to doubt whether the improved methods of pedagogy offer a more potent stimulus to the mental activities of the boys. The dominant place assigned to 'method' and the craze for 'precocious specialization' has unmistakably been attended by a proportionate decrease of initiative and

thoroughness. Under the influence of the new Psychology, educationists have laid greater stress on the development of the art of teaching than on the labour and toil involved in the process of learning. Anyway, L. D. Swamikannu Pillai was, characteristically, a product of the Old School often identified with the '*Ratio Studiorum*' or Educational System of the Jesuits.

In December 1878, he sat for the Matriculation Examination. Much was expected of him and we suspect, it was with some feeling of disappointment that the results were received. He had secured the fifth place in the Presidency, a splendid achievement for a boy of thirteen, though, perhaps, not up to the expectations of his teachers and companions. When he joined the F. A. class in the beginning of 1879, a considerable change was noticed in him, which became more and more marked as days passed. His usual cheerfulness and merriment did not altogether desert him ; but an air of seriousness and gravity now characterized all his movements and actions. He became, so to say, wedded to his studies, and

wasted no time in vain and fruitless amusements. The result of this intensified application was a first class both in the F. A. and B. A. examinations in which he ranked first and second respectively in the Presidency. The latter, especially, was a remarkable feat for young Swamikannu who, under very unfavourable circumstances, had chosen Mathematics for his optional subject.

In 1882, Sir W. W. Hunter, President of the Education Commission, paid a visit to St. Joseph's, accompanied by the Rev. Dr. William Miller of the Christian College, Madras. Swamikannu Pillai, a mere lad of seventeen who had just passed his B. A., was asked by the authorities of the College to prepare an address of welcome. He did so, and greatly distinguished himself by reading a Latin poem, the elegance and melody of which were much appreciated by the distinguished visitors. In reply, Sir W. W. Hunter improvised a few Latin verses complimenting the youthful Latinist as well as the Institution which he compared to a classic ground, and its Rector to a gardener that had come from a far-famed

Academic grove in the West to cultivate rare and delicate plants at Negapatam.

After taking his degree, Mr. Swamikannu Pillai offered his services to the College in which he had received education, and he followed its vicissitudes when, at the time of the Concordat of 1886, St. Joseph's College was transferred from Negapatam to Trichinopoly. Needless to say that, as a Professor of English, he contributed not a little to its popularity in the new home. Indeed, it would be hard to praise too highly his splendid talents. His intellect was of the first order, strong and penetrating and clear. As he used to say, 'he took to Latin as a fish takes to water' and would read his classics as Macaulay put it with 'his feet in the fender.' He was in fact a model student to the end of his life. It was said that he knew fourteen languages, both Eastern and Western, and was equally at home in Tamil and in English. In fact, he seems to have taken, as far as a man may, all forms of learning as his province. Indian Chronology and Scientific Astronomy were his special subjects in which he did pioneer work. But

he was equally interested in Mathematics, Politics, History, Religion and Philosophy. His mind was as wide as it was powerful. The list of his published works* bears testimony to the depth of his scholarship on the one hand, and on the other, to his industrious habits which enabled him to continue his studies and researches of his youth amidst the incessant official duties of his career. THE INDIAN CHRONOLOGY and THE INDIAN EPHEMERIS are enough to immortalize the name of Mr. Swamikannu Pillai as a leader in a new line of investigation in which he was held to be one of the three or four authorities in the whole world.

He had a facile pen. 'English,' wrote Mr. Ruthnaswami, 'in his keeping was a polished instrument of expression.' Even a short conversation with him was enough to make one feel he was in the presence of a first-rate literary man. There was a ring of eighteenth

* Indian Chronology, 1911
Indian Ephemeris, 700 A D. to 2000 A,D., 1922
Indian Antiquary
Secrets of Memory
Phonal Shorthand in five volumes
Madras Year Book 1924.

century style in his polished and crystal-like sentences. They reminded you of Addison and Steele. It was difficult to resist the impression that he had made a special study of these writers, and many thought that, in other circumstances, he might have become a very distinguished member of the little Senate over which the author of CATO ruled like a king. These achievements would have been even greater if Swamikannu Pillai had been in a position to devote exclusively to science and literature the rare talents of his mind. But he was too poor for the seclusion of the scholar's cloister. It is indeed much to be regretted that no Mæcenas came forward to offer young Swamikannu a scholarship for higher studies in England when he topped the list in the B.A. Examination of 1882. It would be vain and profitless at this distance of time to indulge in the forecast of mere possibilities, but one cannot help thinking that in few other instances, University money was destined in the long run to show better returns. As it is, Mr. Swamikannu Pillai must for ever remain a genius of

"unfulfilled renown," a scholar to whom the great opportunity was never offered.

FROM CLERK TO PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

But let us retrace our steps to pursue chronologically the narrative of his life. The first attempts to cut a career for himself were not attended with much success. Of all professions, Education is the least remunerative from a financial view-point, and Mr. Swamikannu Pillai was unquestionably in need of money. From St. Joseph's College he joined the Government Secretariat as a clerk on Rs. 50. Dissatisfied with the personnel, the work and its monotonous drudgery, he accepted, in 1890-91, a post of Lecturer in Latin in the Presidency College. He tried, but found it extremely difficult to enter the Provincial Educational Service. At this period, he was already a Master of Arts, he became a Bachelor of Laws of the Madras University and took the LL. B. Degree of London. In the Provincial Civil Service Examination for which he competed, the first place went to his rival Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao. This

failure, if such it can be called, was a bitter disappointment to Swamikannu Pillai who, conscious of his abilities, was trying hard to find an opening to an official career. Fortunately, Sir Henry Stokes came to his rescue. He had come in contact with Swamikannu Pillai in Madras, and, struck by his linguistic and scholarly attainments, offered him a post as Deputy Collector in 1892. Few acts of kindness, if success be the measure of their value, have been bestowed on more deserving persons. From hence onwards, it became easy for Swamikannu Pillai to carve his way to the top of the ladder and bestride this narrow world like a colossus. He soon became Asst. Secretary to the Board of Revenue (1895-1906.), Secretary to the same Board (1906-1911), and Registrar of Co-operative Societies (1911-1917). It was a new department where much legislation and reform was needed. The name of Swamikannu Pillai shall be for ever associated with the history of the co-operative movement in this Presidency. For, his mastery of the literature on co-operation in English, French and German enabled him to

do much pioneer work and he took infinite pains to popularize the scheme by his tours and many lectures. He was appointed Collector and District Magistrate (1917-1920), Director of Agriculture for a short period and First Secretary to the Council (1920-1923). Whilst in the latter office he was deputed by the Governor of Madras to go to England to study Parliamentary procedure. He succeeded Sir P. Rajagopalachari as President, when the latter was appointed to the India Council, and was elected in the second reformed Legislative Council as its first non-official President. The choice was anything but popular with a section of the representatives of the people, but even they, in the end, had to confess that his tact and gentle and affable manners won for him the good will of the House. Such was the career of this man, who, step by step, through no favour or luck, but sheer ability and hard work, rose from the humble status of a clerk to position second only to that of the Governor himself.

But the greatness of Dewan Bahadur L. D. Swamikannu Pillai lies not in

success, but in the fact that he succeeded because as a man he was great. He had no doubt the initial advantage of splendid abilities with which to make a start. But even these, after all, are not so rare in our days of cheap and universal education. Many of his contemporaries both at school and in public life, ranked not far below him in mere wealth of intellectual attainments. The key to his felicitous career must be searched for elsewhere. To the remarkable talents with which nature and heredity had endowed his mind, he was fortunate enough to add the best qualities of a really noble heart. He lost none of the opportunities which education in a Jesuit College offers, especially to Catholic students, for the building up of character.

A Perfect Gentleman

Newman's well-known definition of a gentleman fitted him like a glove. As his friend Mr. M. Ruthnaswami put it, 'he was modest to the point of self-suppression, shy and reserved at first approach but genuinely cordial on deeper acquaintance, pure in private life, and a puritan in his public career, animated by the

spirit of sacrifice for those who were near and dear to him, he passed through the disappointments and troubles of public life with a lofty courage and an unbreakable trust in God. For, we must remember, Swamikannu Pillai was no Wordsworth content to commune with nature, but had to deal with men of the world and rub shoulders with them. A public career is no bed of roses in which to lie for much solitary contemplation. The Council Hall, in a special manner, is the greatest arena for the play of character. And Swamikannu Pillai as Secretary and President of the Legislative Council, it was remarked, never deviated from fine manners and courtesy. He had an imperturbable temper, and there has been not a single occasion on which even momentarily he lost his self-control or behaved discourteously. Swamikannu Pillai was, by nature, shy and reserved. Free and straightforward in the discharge of the duties attached to his official capacity, he anxiously shrank into himself from the hard world. He was ever ill at ease in ordinary society, but longed to escape back to the

bosom of his family or the intimate conversation of a few friends. He was too deeply intellectual to move freely on the picturesque stage of our metropolitan society and too dignified, perhaps too respectful, to adopt in it the simple style and quaint humour that were the charms of his conversations with friends and acquaintances. This recalls to mind another trait in the character of Mr. Swamikannu Pillai, his extreme courtesy which, coupled with his geniality, modesty and humility, conveyed to those, who happened not to know him, no idea of his intellectual attainments and social position. Courtesy is not so common nowadays as many people would have it. It is not mere politeness, a quality much more fashionable and which is, often enough, only a cloak with which we cover a multitude of sins, more especially the sin of selfishness. The courtesy of Mr. Swamikannu Pillai was old-fashioned and genuine. With him it was a quality of nobility, an expression of the fine soul, inseparable from kindness and gentleness and the love of ordered beauty and the understanding of the pleasure and pain of others.

A Model Catholic

Now to these gifts, great as they were, we must add yet another as the crown and coping-stone of the whole. Mr. Swamikannu Pillai was, above, all a model Catholic layman. Religion was the very root and branch of his being. Much as he loved letters, science and art, the beauties of nature and the charm of his children, yet all these pleasures were secondary. Born of Catholic parents, educated in a Catholic College, he remained to the end a fervent Catholic in mind and heart. His respect for Ecclesiastical authorities knew no bounds. Not all, perhaps, realise to the full the implications of this last statement. Obedience and submission are held almost in contempt in our days. Few can now appreciate Newman when he talks of the 'real pleasure of submitting.' There are occasions in the life of a Catholic when a man of the mental gifts and the social position of Mr. Swamikannu Pillai must find submission to the ordinary views and opinions of other men, even when placed in authority, very hard to the flesh. Perhaps, Swamikannu

Pillai never appeared greater in the eyes of those who can see than when such an occasion came in his way in 1917 after the Bishops' Conference at Bangalore. In it some measures of discipline were discussed and adopted by the Bishops of the Archdiocese of Madras with a view to introduce more uniformity in the attitude of Catholic laymen towards the social and political problems of the day. To a section of the community, the Conference was unpopular. An agitation was soon set afoot to oppose the action of the Bishops. For some time and in perfect good faith, Mr. Swamikannu Pillai adhered to the party of opposition, but on recognising his mistake, he withdrew from the party and published a pamphlet "The Agitation anent the Bishops' Conference", condemning the movement and undoing the possible evil his co-operation might have caused.

Piety is the truthful attitude which creatures assume in respect of their Creator, an attitude of the soul often gathered up into particular actions and concentrated in special rituals. It centres around the altar and delights in the

fulfilment of all the practices by which intelligent beings express their adoration and worship of the Deity. The elaborate and majestic ritual of the sacramental life of the Catholic Church on the one hand, and on the other, the stupendous wealth of well-regulated devotions towards God and His Saints are intended to express the concrete aspect of the virtue of religion. Mr. Swamikannu Pillai was a man of deep and sincere piety. Let no one be tempted to scoff at him for keeping a lamp burning day and night before the images of Saints or for joining in a procession in honour of the Blessed Virgin. To be sure, Mr. Swamikannu Pillai felt quite at home with the badge of a sodalist and a lighted taper in his hand, more at home, we believe, than when he had to attend official ceremonies in presidential robes or a University Convocation amidst Fellows and Senators in antiquated costumes. The late Duke of Norfolk, whom Swamikannu Pillai resembled so much in the piety of his life, knew how to harmonize the outward manifestations of religious belief with

the respect due to worldly greatness. Mr. Swamikannu Pillai, we have said, was a sodalist and a member of the Apostleship of Prayer and kept up the practice of reciting the Office of the Blessed Virgin and preparing for all the feasts celebrated in her honour. He faithfully followed the First Friday devotions. As a young man, he was a weekly communicant, but when Pius X recommended to the faithful the practice of frequent and daily Communion, he quietly adopted the practice and urged it on his children. He had a child-like love for our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and a tender devotion for His Passion. Rosary and Night Prayers were sacred in his family, and they had to be recited in time, and under no condition to be omitted. Grace before and after meals was always to be said aloud even when non-Catholic and Hindu friends were present, so much so, says his daughter in a letter to which we shall refer presently, that when some Hindu friends invited the children to their table, they would expect them to say Grace before meals. Briefly, he practised all the devotions and exercises

he had learnt at school, and promptly added others as they came to be adopted in the Church.

His Domestic Life

The last trait in the character of Mr. Swamikannu Pillai, his domestic virtues and the love of his family, have been dealt with charmingly by one of his most favoured children. We would fain reprint the whole letter as it stands, did we not fear that it falls outside the scope of an essay. But no one can hope to describe it more feelingly and more sweetly than that part of the letter which refers to his domestic life. It is, therefore, fitting to wind up this Memoir with a quotation from it :—

"As you have expressed your desire to get some details about the domestic life of my beloved father, I shall just mention the personal experiences of a child of its father. My first experience of him was his great love for his children. Nothing which could increase their innocent pleasure he would deprive them of, at any cost whatsoever to his personal convenience or expenditure. I say innocent, because what I shall say hereafter will prove that he was never an over-indulgent father. He would come home late at night in these days, perhaps somewhere after eight. But we, his little ones, could not sleep without seeing him that evening. Even if sleep closed our eyes, we would wake up again at the announcement of his coming and rush to the gate to welcome him. Sleep would fly. But there often would people be waiting to see him. If they came on business matters, he sent

them away quickly, as eager to listen to our childish joys and sorrows and happenings of the day as we were to prattle out our stories. Our first exchange of news being over, we would say our prayers. After that, we went for supper. He would finish his frugal repast quickly and would keep us amused with anecdotes from his rich fund of sparkling humour. More than once, he told us that he was never happier than when surrounded only by his family. He was never in a hurry to rise from table after supper, because that was the only time for our confidential and mutual chats. Although he was most uninterfering, each one of us felt he must know everything. That was all the more reason why we felt that he must know all our secrets.

"After supper when he rose to go to his office room, again we, his darling little ones, would follow him for some more 'robber stories', 'fairy tales', 'Nursery Rhymes' or 'baby poems.' By this time, nature would really assert herself and sleep would clasp us tight in her angry arms and weigh down our naughty lids, so much so, an aunt or elder sister would have to carry us to bed. Even then, if we woke up on the way to our beds, we would tear ourselves away back to the arms of our loving father. Perhaps, he would come himself to put us to bed. He used his original powers to amuse his darlings at home, as much as to compose great works. Each toy and sweet had a story of its own. So it was not only gratifying our sweet teeth but also feeding our baby intellects with new ideas. Father was our great store-house of Nursery Rhymes. Later on, I used to wonder whether he did not think them too insignificant to be retained in his memory side by side with all the greater things. I was nearly forgetting to say that he never failed to supply us with these stories and Nursery Rhymes in their usual garb of Picture Books. Those books are gone long ago and the dear story-teller himself has since closed his sweet eyes for ever to the fleeting pleasures of this mortal world.

Such was Dewan Bahadur L. D. Swamikannu Pillai, who, loved, admired and lamen-

ted by all, passed away on the 10th of September, 1925 :

A combination and a form indeed
Where every good did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man.

Hamlet, III. iv. 55-57.

NARAYAN VAMAN TILAK

INTRODUCTION

NARAYAN VAMAN TILAK, the Christian poet of Maharashtra, was a striking character in many respects. Patriot, poet and missionary, he wielded a great influence on the life and ideals of his countrymen in Western India. A towering personality among Indian Christians, he touched his generation at more points than one, now by his faith and piety, now by his indefatigable social service and again by his unfailing spirit of patriotism. Unlike his more famous namesake Bal Gangadhar Tilak, he seldom interfered in politics but like him had dedicated his life to learning and service. "Tilak was of the company of the men of faith for whom the unseen verities are far more evident and more sure than the passing shows of the world, and both by the witness of his life and character, and through the magic of his poetry was able to

share with others the vision which was his own unfailing inspiration." So writes Mr. J. C. Winslow who has contributed an excellent life sketch of the patriot-poet for whom he offers a secure place among the "Builders of Modern India." Indeed, the influence which his ideals and writings have exerted in Maharashtra particularly among the Christian community, is of a quality that deserves wider recognition and it is but fitting that the name of this pious and patriotic poet should be included in any record of the lives of Christian worthies in India.

PARENTAGE

Mr. Tilak was born at Karazzaon in Bombay Presidency in 1862. He came of the famous family of Chitpavan Brahmans which has produced in recent times such brilliant men as Ranade and Gokhale and Tilak. Pandita Ramabai and Nehemiah Goreh belonged to the same stock but it was left to Tilak to add to their service by his divine gift of poesy. It has been said that the natural scenery amid which his early childhood was passed and the life of the home in which he grew up contribut-

ed considerably to the making of the future poet and religious leader. Mr. Winslow, to whose *Life* of Tilak, we are indebted for the material for this sketch, gives a charming account of the prodigal beauty of the mountain sides and the simple freedom of the home wherein he was born and nurtured. For the home that reared him was not his father's. His father's village was Chikhalgaon, in another part of the District; but Vaman Rao (for that was the name of his father) was a Government Registrar with a considerable circle of villages to visit. The peripatetic officer found little time to be in the company of his wife and children and Narayan was brought up in his mother's home where he was the idol of his mother's father—an old Sadhu who after a pilgrimage to Pandarpur was spending his declining years in retirement, devoting himself solely to worship and meditation. Narayan's mother Janakibai, was a woman of a most lovable nature and of a deep religious faith. She was moreover a poetess and a ready composer of women's songs ; and Tilak believed that he inherited his poetical

faculty from her. When Narayan was seven years old, this happy home life was broken up and a new home was set up at Kalyan. For Vaman Rao was transferred to Mokheda in the Nasik district and the peripatetic father now and then visited this seperate establishment which was an hour's run from Bombay. Seventeen children were born of whom three boys and two girls alone survived. Sakharam the second son, was in favour with his father, as also was Sakhu, the younger daughter; but the youngest boy Mahadev, was disliked as much as the eldest, Narayan. It would appear that some astrological reading of Narayan's life forebode a change of religion which hardened his parent against him. And when Janakibai died after a raging fever Narayan was deprived even of the consolations of a mother's love.

EDUCATION

The ties of home having snapped so early Narayan went about straining every nerve to make both ends meet. His father had sent the other four children to be under his charge and Rs. 8 a month on which to keep them. It was a heavy burden; and his own education had

to suffer in his efforts to run the establishment on the allowance. But Narayan was a plucky boy. He studied Sanskrit under the famous Vedic scholar Ganesh Sastri Hele and won the first prize for elocution and oratory. English, he began to master by a curious method—— that of getting the dictionary by heart.

When he had plodded halfway through the volume, he went one day to the headmaster of the High School, eager for more thorough instruction in the language. "How much English have you learnt?" he was asked. "As far as M," was the reply. The headmaster took him into the school free of charge, and in two years educated him up to the fifth standard, poetry, languages and history being the subjects which attracted him most. The brothers also had a good English education.

Narayan himself, says his biographer, after reaching the sixth standard, was obliged to leave school and set about earning enough to supplement the slender means of himself and his brothers and sisters, but he continued to prosecute his studies diligently in all leisure moments, and was throughout life a student of

English literature, acquiring thereby the power of writing and speaking English with ease and fluency.

Soon after he left school, when he was barely eighteen, Narayan was married to Manubai, a girl of eleven in the family of the Gokhales at Jalalpur. Then followed years of constant change of occupation and scene. We are told that his mind was in the ferment of a great unrest.

His impetuous and untiring intellect was pressing forward unceasingly into ever new fields of enquiry. He would sit for hours absorbed in study, heedless of meal-times and oblivious of any who might be seated with him. He had a passion to excel in oratory, and committed to memory whole speeches from Burke and Pitt and from translations of Demosthenes. But poetry—Sanskrit, Marathi and English—was always his best-loved study; and his own poems, growing daily richer in imaginative power and more accurate in technique, flowed from him in moments of inspiration with extraordinary rapidity. Some Sanskrit poetry also he wrote in these early years; but this never stirred him as did his own beloved tongue, and he continued it but a short time.

LIVELIHOOD

Leaving his wife with her own people at Jalalpur, Tilak would go forth on long and distant wanderings, returning to them from time to time for a few months' sojourn. He wandered in this way for a year or two in Khandesh

often begging his food from place to place as a Sadhu, but for a time settling down to regular work as headmaster of a school in Dhamak in the Varhad District. He would give speeches, *Kirtans* and *Puranas* in different places, and often earned in this way sufficient for his scanty needs. At one time we hear of him in sacred Dwarka, at another at Nagpur, at another at Rajnandgaon, working for six months in a printing press. Presently he is in Poona, and then again in Bombay, supporting himself by writing letters for illiterate people or by teaching in a Girgaum school. He had an enthusiasm for popular education, and during this period started, in succession, three schools in the Nasik neighbourhood—one at Panchavati, one at Murbad, where his father was now *talathi* and one at Wani. He had a natural gift for teaching, and was loved both by the children and by the many adults who attended the school.

Coming to Fame

About 1887 his first son Vidyadhar was born but died after a year. A daughter born in 1889 also died in quick succession and in 1891

was born his son and heir Dattatreeya and from this time forwards he took his wife to be with him and resolved to train himself to a settled life. This was made possible by the courtesy of one Appa Saheb Butt, a wealthy citizen of Nagpur who employed him to edit a great mass of Vedic literature gathered by him at enormous cost. At this time a great religious controversy was raging in Nagpur; and Tilak, from the first no-negligible opponent and now freshly equipped from his armoury of Sanskrit scriptures, entered the fray, and by his refutation of the leading and most orthodox *sastras* earned for himself the title of *Pandit*.

His fame as a poet also spread abroad and he began now to publish for his patron a monthly magazine called RISHI for the discussion of religious and philosophical questions. But his restless spirit bade him move onwards and he shook the dust of Nagpur off his feet and the RISHI expired.

REVOLT AGAINST CASTE

For while engrossed in the study of different religions and philosophies his mind was

undergoing a supreme metamorphosis. He had ceased to be bound by the word of the Veda : he had begun to analyse the teachings of the Smrithis and question the conclusions of ancient learning. Earlier still in life the atmosphere of freedom and unconventionality in his mother's home helped him to take a broad and tolerant view of things and he felt himself free to follow his own nose. He shook himself free from fanatical orthodoxy. Thus early developed in him an independent and liberal outlook taking him away from the round of orthodox tradition. Caste and the performance of religious rituals became hateful to him. Indeed, he openly defied some regulations of caste and the youthful pilgrim "fared forth in independent and fearless adventure for the truth."

Yet another strand was woven into the texture of his thoughts—the vision of his country's freedom and splendour. In early years, he came under the influence of a schoolmaster. Though this man never knew how to be truly use ful to his country, yet he had the burning

love of a true patriot. He made the little heads under his charge as dizzy with patriotism as his own. "This circumstance and others gave a peculiar turn to my mind. I well remember that even in my tender years, when I sat in the schoolroom for a lesson in geography, my mind was absent, for I was musing over the deep problem of India's future." "Henceforward," says Mr. Winslow, "It was this yearning love for his country even more than his own eager quest for truth which spurred him on. He longed to find for her a path by which she could become great and free, and could shake off those shackles which seemed to him to chain her. Whilst not indifferent to her political bondage, it was, above all, her moral and spiritual slavery which distressed his soul. Particularly he longed to sweep away the twin barriers of idolatry and caste."

Causes of his Conversion

All through the ten years of wandering which followed the marriage his mind was pressing forward on its untiring quest. Well, it was this spiritual unrest which drew him from place to

place. He wandered about like a Sadhu in quest of truth and fell in with a kindred spirit from Bengal. They tried Yoga for a time and gave it up. It was after this that he began to edit a new monthly on religion and philosophy. But his new opinions were too much for his patron and he quitted service and obtained employment from the Raja of Rajnandgaon. On the way he came in contact with a European who became the immediate cause of his conversion. After some conversation on poets and poetry the stranger asked him about his attitude to Christianity :—

I told him my new doctrines, and, to my great surprise, he observed that I should be a Christian before a couple of years were passed. I thought it a mad prediction. We talked a long time. He said, 'Young man, God is leading you. Study the Bible and study the life of Jesus, and you will surely be a Christian.' I simply ridiculed what I regarded as this man's audacity. At last he prayed and gave me a copy of the New Testament. I promised him that I would read it, even though I should dislike it at first. I made the promise, not so much for any interest I had in the Bible, as for the feeling of personal friendship which this man's kindness had awakened. I got out at Rajnandgaon, and we parted with a hearty good-bye. Strange that we never thought of enquiring as to each other's name, residence or occupation !

" According to my usual custom, I resolved to go through the book marking with pencil the points worth noticing ; but, when I reached the Sermon on the Mount, I could not tear myself away from those

burning words of love and tenderness and truth. In these three chapters I found answers to the most abstruse problems of Hindu philosophy. It amazed me to see how here the most profound problems were completely solved. I went on eagerly reading to the last page of the Bible, that I might learn more of Christ."

He continued his studies at Rajanandgaon which only confirmed his intellectual acceptance of Christianity. He concluded that Christ was the teacher whom India and the world needed.

"Five points in regard to Jesus Christ impressed me most deeply. First, I found in Him the ideal man. Second, it is He, and He alone, who makes love to God and to man of the same importance. Third, His perfect identification with His Father. Fourth, His inconceivable faith in Himself as the life and the light of the world. Fifth, His Cross and the whole history of His crucifixion."

But the knowledge of His teachings led to an appreciation of His power. Mr. Tilak records some instances where the power of Jesus and the efficacy of prayer are verified by some miracles. It was at this time too that he came in contact with Rev. Misal and Baba Padmanji, a learned convert in Bombay with whom Tilak carried on a considerable correspondence:

'It was on the 10th of March, 1894, that I wrote my first letter to any Christian. This was to a man whom

I knew by reputation as a writer. A few months after this date I believe I was a true Christian at heart."

He had found in Jesus Christ the goal of his long search, "that living Guru who could most richly satisfy his soul's hunger" ; and to Him he gave himself in thankful devotion and with all the passionate enthusiasm of his ardent nature.

HIS CONVERSION.

"As a Hindu I had, and still have, a typical respect and love to my Guru; and, when Jesus became my Guru, naturally I regarded and loved him with all the fervour and intensity of a real disciple. I experienced a peculiar fellowship with Him. This much I know that I could not be happy if I missed Him."

Conviction slowly led the way to conversion. But he could no more escape persecution than those who had gone before him. Poverty, loss of employment, loss of friends, every obstacle stood in the way. His own wife turned against him and sought with the help of others to dissuade him from being baptized. But God, he felt, was with him and was leading him to the Cross. Someone appeared uttering the words, "Follow Him, fear nothing." He at once wrote to the Rev. J. E. Abbott, of the American Marathi Mission, requesting him to publish the fact that he was a Christian. He did so,

and he was greatly relieved. At last he came to Bombay, and was baptized on the 10th of February 1895, exactly two years after he received the Bible from the gentleman in the train.

Estrangement from friends and relations was cruel but separation from his wife and son caused him the keenest pangs. When the news of his baptism arrived, his wife became frenzied with grief. "Look after her for me," he had said to his brother (who had come to him in Bombay to see for himself what Narayan was planning to do, and who carried back the news), "but be careful! Remember, Ganga is near." The warning, says Mr. Winslow, was not unneeded. Several times the distracted woman tried to fling herself into the river or into the well. For weeks she was as one beside herself, while her sister cared for her.

"She wrote passionate letters to her husband, in prose and in poetry, pleading with him to return. She said bitterly that she would write a tragedy and dedicate it to him. She seemed to be sick unto death with

the agony of separation. He sent her repeated assurances that he would be true to her, promising never to marry another nor to take away her child, though friends encouraged him to have the boy with him, believing that his mother would then soon follow. One thing only he could never do. He could never forsake Christ nor re-enter the fold of Hinduism."

But then his wife was in an agony of distraction. His prayers and expostulations to her to follow him unto Christ had no effect. She was a resolute child of orthodoxy and she endeavoured to reconvert her husband to the faith of his forbears. It is interesting to find that Bal Gangadhar Tilak secured permission from the leading Sastris of Benares for his restoration. But all to no purpose.

CONVERSION OF HIS WIFE

For five years he waited for her—years of unwearying love and prayer. He was given work with the American Marathi Mission at Ahmadnagar. For two years, says Mr. Winslow, his wife remained at Pandharpur, but soon, worried to death by the

constant harassing of relations, she was about to escape from them when her husband arrived to visit her, and found to his joy and astonishment that she was willing to return with him to Ahmadnagar, if provision were made for her in a separate house. He agreed gladly, and secured her a house in the city. "She let him go to her daily, and read and pray, but not teach. Presently she consented to live within the same compound with him, though still in a separate house; and, when plague broke out at Ahmadnagar, they went together to the Mission station at Rahuri, where Christian friends found her willing to receive instruction. So, little by little, she drew nearer to him. At last she ceased to keep caste with him, and let him bring the water and help with the cooking. They went together in the hot weather of the year (1900) to Mahableshwar, and there it was that the barriers which had restrained her so long suddenly crumbled away."

The one bar to its acceptance was now removed. They returned to Rahuri, where she was baptized with her son Dattu; and from

that day onwards until the day of Tilak's death, she was his first guide and counsellor.

MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

With the acceptance of Christ and the restoration of his wife and child, his restlessness ceased and he settled down to his life work with the American Marathi Mission at Ahmednagar. Then followed twenty one years of steady work "marked by domestic life of rare beauty and happiness, and a public ministry of increasing usefulness."

It was at this time too that he came in close touch with some of the leading spirits of the evangelical movement in Western India—Dr. Abbot and Rev. Hume. Between the latter and Tilak there grew up a beautiful friendship consecrated by mutual admiration and confidence. Together they worked for the mission for one and twenty years. Tilak showed his appreciation of Dr. Hume's friendship by desiring in his will that two pictures, one of Dr. Hume and one of himself, should be hung side by side in the theological seminary, inscribed respectively, "The Foster-Father" and "The Foster-Child

His principal work was done in the Seminary where he co-operated with Dr. Hume in his educational work, teaching Hinduism and non-Christian systems, Marathi and Sanskrit, the Gita with Sankara's commentary, Kirtan making and Church history. Ordained on 31st August 1904 he also preached in the Mission Church. He loved rich and dignified ceremonials as calculated to inspire Indian Christians. He believed that full stress should be laid upon the observance of the fasts and feasts of the Church, and he wrote an admirable booklet for Indian Christians upon the meaning and value of the season of Lent.

In the midst of this educational and ministerial work Tilak still found time for much social work in the city. He was the friend of all, and did much to promote a better mutual acquaintance amongst all classes in the town. He was always eager to stimulate literary and artistic activities. He conducted for some time a class for the study of Marathi poetry, and also gave much encouragement to the teachers of painting and drawing, helping them to start a club for the improvement of their art.

In 1903 plague broke out at Ahmednagar. His daughter Tara was attacked; and the father and mother went with her to the hospital and ministered to the needs of the sick and wounded. Later he began to work among the village Christians in and around Rahuri.

"I have been a volunteer worker in the Mission since last January. I am impressed with the idea that our chief need is *voluntary Christian service* by Indian Christians, with the guidance of Missions, and in perfect co-operation with the paid agency of Missions. I have been enabled to build a house on a splendid site at Rahuri, which is called 'Christ-Sadan,' *i.e.* Christ-Home. Here Mrs. Tilak and I have pledged ourselves to receive the enquirer after truth, the forlorn, and the fallen. Besides this the house provides for a volunteer Christian worker during the time he waits upon the Lord for preparation."

Social Work

With this must be added his efforts for the creation and working of voluntary institutions for teaching the 3 R's and peripatetic organizations for preaching the Gospel among the Mahars in the District. Next year he wrote:

"The work of Christ Sadan has been steadily progressing. Enquirers from remote parts of India come and stay, are helped to understand the meaning and necessity of the salvation offered by Christ. Last year five such persons visited the Home, each staying on an average four weeks. One hundred and eleven letters were written to answer the questions and doubts of enquirers residing in different parts of India. Christ-Sadan, as usual, is open to sick, the old and the fallen, and the writer is thankful to God that

He has up to now enabled him to help these, giving him very often extra work to do and extra wages for it, and inspiring sometimes brothers and sisters to contribute pecuniarily towards the work."

But all through the years in Ahmednagar Tilak's spare moments were filled with literary work. His poetry must be dealt with separately but a word must be said of his journalistic work as also his work in Marathi prose.

As a Journalist

In 1900, he started editing a vernacular monthly paper, called Christi ("The Christian"). It was carried on entirely by himself and Mrs. Tilak, without pecuniary help from the Mission, and was intended partly to supply useful Christian knowledge to simple Christians and partly to interest non-Christians also. In 1904, with the help of Mr. B. N. Kotak and the Rev. Ganpatrao Navalkar, he started The Christian Citizen, an Anglo-vernacular monthly paper, widely circulated among Christians and non-Christians, which ran for three years. It was in this paper that Tilak began his translation into Marathi of *The Imitation of Christ*, two books of which he composed before his death. In the hot weather of 1905, he was at Kedgaon,

helping Pandita Ramabai in her translation of the New Testament.

A paper for children, called BALBODHMEWA, was edited at this time by Miss Hattie Bruce under the auspices of the American Marathi Mission. Tilak began to write for this in 1895, and from that time till 1909, when it came to an end, was a constant contributor to its columns, both in prose and verse.

From the first, too, Tilak wrote frequently for the DNYANODAYA, an English-Marathi weekly published now by a group of Missions, but in Tilak's time by the American Mission. It deals mainly with religious topics and is intended primarily for Christians, but especially of recent years has come to reach a wider circle of readers. The paper has an English and a Marathi editor, and the latter post was accepted by Tilak in 1912, and filled by him from that time onwards until his death. The columns of the paper gave him free scope for the expression of his views, not only on specifically religious questions, but on current matters of political, social and and moral interest, on which he could "turn the

searchlight of Christian principles." Much of his most vigorous writing, both in prose and verse, appeared in the DNYANODAYA.

He was reaching a wider fame, says his biographer, through his public speaking in many places and through his contributions to the monthly Marathi magazine MANORANJAN. He was also a secretary and leading member of a society for the publication of modern Marathi poetry, known as Saradaprasadan Mandal. The public recognition of his literary merit reached a fitting climax in May, 1915, when he was appointed president of the Natyasammelan '—almost the highest honour, it is said, that the literary world of Maharashtra can bestow.

One aspect of Tilak's character was his deep love for India. His intense patriotism found adequate and frequent expression in all his writings, particularly in his poems. But he was above all an Indian Christian proud of his ancient heritage and anxious to Indianise the Church in the interests of Indian Christians.

Tilak felt that patriotism could transcend the differences of religion or sect, and be

a powerful bond for uniting a divided India.

"It will be a blessed day for India," he used to say "when every Indian, of whatever school, sect, or religion he be, unites with others in the common service of the Motherland, under the inspiration of patriotism. There is only one thing that will unite Christians, Mussulmans, Parsees, and Hindus, with their thousand and one castes, and that is the love of country."

His Poetry

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, with whom he had considerable intercourse in earlier days, he saw less after his conversion; but the nationalist leader never forgot him and he sent him later a presentation copy of *Gitarahasya*, the famous commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, which he wrote during his six years' imprisonment. Some of Tilak's patriotic songs deserve to be remembered. It is the Rishis and Sages of ancient Ind that still inspire his Muse and he sings in praise of the large hearted toleration of his countrymen for men of other faiths. In one of his abhangs he sings:

Thrice blessed is thy womb, my Motherland,
Whence mighty rishis, saints and sages spring;
A Christian I, yet here none taunteth me,
Nor buffeteth with angry questioning.
I meet and greet them, and with love embrace:
None saith, "Thou dost pollute us by thy sin!"

My Guru they delight to venerate;
They say, "He is our brother and our kin."
Let no man fancy that I idly prate;
Such kindness greets me always, everywhere.
Saith Dasa, O thou peerless Mother mine,
Thy generous sons thy generous heart declare.

Few things pained him more than the discovery that a Christian was lacking in such patriotism. It is recorded that on one occasion two Indian students of the theological seminary were dining with him, and in the course of conversation one of the students indulged in some offensive criticisms of India and Indians. Tilak, unable to endure it, left the table hurriedly, and presently composed a poem beginning with the lines:

When as I heard men slander thee, Mother, it grieved me so,
For very rage I thought my soul would burst her bars and go!

One of the ways in which Tilak helped to make his fellow Christians more truly Indian was by teaching them to study and love the older Marathi literature, specially the devotional poetry of Dnyaneshwar, Namdev and Tukaram, on which he constantly fed his own spirit. He believed that it was "over the bridge of Tukaram's verse" that he came to Christ.

The poetry of the Maratha saints, instinct with the emotion of loving devotion to God and longing for Him was, he believed, a *praeparatio evangelica* for the Christian Gospel. "We esteem all the world's saints," he wrote, "as prophets of God, and the sayings of the Hindu saints form our first Old Testament."

But undoubtedly Tilak's greatest contribution towards the "naturalization" of the Christian Church in India lay in that treasury of devotional lyrics with which he enriched her. Until he began to pour forth his bhajans, says Mr. Winslow, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that Marathi-speaking Christians had no outlet for the pouring out of the heart's devotion in the worship of God. "The emotion changes with the mood of the music. Now it is a song of worship and adoration; now a passionate yearning for the Presence; now a transport of loving devotion; now the peace of a calm self-surrender to the divine Lover. This to the Indian is worship, and from this the Indian Christian of Maharashtra was cut off till Tilak came."

Till his time the devotion of the Indian soul fed itself on English hymns translated into doggeral Marathi. Now all this is changed, and the Christian Church in Maharashtra possesses a collection of Christian psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs which for literary merit and wealth of spiritual conception can have few rivals indeed.

The wealth of Christian poetry which Tilak has left behind him includes, not only three or four hundred original hymns of his own, but also renderings into Marathi poetry of some of the best English hymns, such as "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," and Addison's "The stately firmament on high," and also of some of the Psalms, and of ancient canticles of the Church, such as the *Te Deum* and the *Gloria in Excelsis*.

Another debt which the Christian Church owes to Tilak is his encouragement of what is called the kirtan as a means of preaching to non-Christians, and of edification for Christians also. The kirtan is a form of religious service, conducted by a single leader with a small choir assisting him, in which

hymns in praise of God alternate with the spoken description of His doings, usually of his doings when incarnate in human form. This form of service is said to have been orginated, or at least to have been popularized, by the poet-saint Namdev in the fourteenth century. "A real kirtan," Tilak said, "ought to be a happy combination of music, poetry eloquence, and humour, all contributing to drive home religious truth." Tilak himself was a master of this form of preaching, and men would sit spell-bound through long hours of the night whilst he told them the story of the life of Christ, and sang and even danced in an ecstasy of devotion. And with the help of his songs, the kirtan has now won a wide popularity in the Christian Church in the Marathi country.

It was natural that Tilak, conscious of India's great spiritual heritage, should hesitate to go in for Western forms of ceremonial and worship. He wrote :—

> Think not of India as of a child's buffoonery or a jester's tricks and airs ;
>
> Here have sprung sages that were lords of yoga whose light abides unto this day,

Men whose faith was their very life, their all, and the world their home.
Yes, even here such kingly saints were born, and in the hearts of all men they shone resplendent.
What boots it to bring here a masquerade of strange disguises and of foreign airs?
All that you gain you'll squander in the end, and about your neck Ignominy shall lay her garland.
Saith Dasa, Here be the Lord Jesus Christ set up on high—that is our need alway!

His Patriotism

As we have already said, Tilak, unlike his great namesake, was no politician but he was a patriot who honestly believed that the salvation of India could come only through Christ. He wrote to his son towards the close of his life :—

"I believe that, unless India follows Jesus Christ, all her efforts to improve her status will ultimately fail. I am exclusively and wholly a preacher of Jesus and Him crucified. I repent to have wasted much of my life in trying to serve my country by taking part in all her different activities. Jesus was a patriot and wished to serve His country, and He tried to lay for its future structure the foundation of the Kingdom of God. Without that foundation civilization may prove a way to utter destruction, materially, as in the case of Belgium, or morally, as in the case of Germany."

Tilak was for a time a member of the Home Rule League but he laid greater emphasis on the removal of untouchability than on removal of foreign domination. When War came in Europe he urged his fellow countrymen to

throw themselves heartily in support of the Empire, and towards the close of the War in 1918 he went so far as to say that the schemes for immediate independence which advanced politicians were pressing were premature and might even be disastrous. Tilak died before Gandhi started his Non-co-operation but we have an interesting record of Tilak's view of Satyagraha. One of the last things Tilak did, two or three days before his end, was to dictate a last message to his countrymen upon the true method of satyagraha as employed by "the greatest *satyagrahi* in history, Jesus of Nazareth." He warmly admired Mahatma Gandhi, whom he described as "in every sense truly worthy of the title Mahatma"; but he considered that he was gravely mistaken in "striving to make satyagraha popular in India, where extremists, anarchists and other mischief-makers are only too eager to abuse so lofty an idea."

The closing years of the nineteenth century witnessed a great revival of Maratha poetry, a revival in which Tilak's part was considerable.

Indeed he might almost be said to be the pioneer of the movement.

MR. TILAK'S POETRY

The new school of Marathi poets hoisted a flag of revolt against the eighteenth-century standards of Marathi poetry, sedulously perfected by Moropant and his school, and affectionately cherished and cultivated by Marathi men of letters in the first three quarters of the last century. Indeed as Prof. Patvardhan pointed out in a scholarly article on Tilak's poetry :

> Polished elegance of language and harmonies of sound, when combined with clever intellectual surprises, passed for the highest poetry before the advent of Tilak, Kesavasut, and their school. Mr. Tilak was among the first to break away from the trodden path and introduce innovations, both as regards metre and conception. He was one of those who carried into effect the healthy influence of the Wordsworthian school, who led Marathi poetry out of doors and taught her to realize the free, open and bracing air of Nature, lured her out of the melancholy precincts of asceticism, coaxed her into discarding the yellow robes of renunciation, and persuaded her to enter with an eager, founding heart into the world of rainbow hues and sunny splendour. The New School of Marathi poetry has emerged from the cramping conception that restricted the field of poetry to matters of piety and devotion, to matters of other-worldly interest, and has taught poetry to live and move and have her being in this world, in the realities of material life. The waving grasses and smiling flowers of the

field, the dancing ears of corn and the nodding heads of trees, the rolling piles of clouds and sparkling drops of dew; these came to be discovered anew, and the might and mystery of the known world lent a fullness and wealth to the new song never before dreamt of. Mr. Tilak shares the credit with Kesavasut, though the latter, who is somewhat junior to the former, was the bolder and hardier innovator. The school to which they belonged brought poetry down from heaven to this world or rather brought the poetic muse to find her delightful abode as much on earth as beyond it. Like the lark of Wordsworth, Marathi poetry in their hands came to be true both to heaven and home."

Tilak and Kesavasut were the true pioneers of this movement.

Perhaps it will not be altogether misleading to say that whilst Kesavasut has often been compared with Shelley, Tilak may be called the Wordsworth of Maharashtra. Wordsworth was his own favourite English poet; and Tilak certainly resembles him in the simplicity of his diction and dislike of artifice, in his love of children and of poetry about them, and in his love of flowers, trees, hills and valleys, and the whole world of Nature, which for him was replete with spiritual meaning a reflection of the Uncreated Beauty at the heart of it.

Tilak's poetical activity, says Mr. Winslow, may be divided roughly into four periods. The first is the period preceding his change of faith, that is, down to the year 1895. During these years he was a diligent student of Sanskrit poetry, and the poems of this time bear the mark of it. The second period is from 1895 to 1900, when he became known

as the poet of flowers and children, from the number of poems he composed on these themes. The third reaches down to the end of 1912, and comprises a great output of both secular and devotional poetry—on the secular side, poems of home life and love, poems of Nature and national and patriotic songs; and on the devotional side, most of the Christian hymns collected together in the *Bhajan Sangraha*. The fourth period covers the last six years of his life, when he wrote almost entirely religious poetry, and specially the first book of the *Christian* (the only book he completed out of eleven) and most of the abhangs in *Abhanganjali*, published just after his death. The periods overlap to a considerable extent, but they do roughly indicate the dominant character of the successive stages of his writings.

We can but touch on one or two of Tilak's poems in this brief sketch in which we are more concerned with his life as a Christian.

Tilak started a small monthly magazine called KAVYAKUSUMANJALI, devoted entirely to Marathi poetry; it was the first of its kind,

but ran only for about a year. In the early nineties Kesavasut, Datta, and Vinayak were beginning to write, and soon the stream of the new poetry was in full flood. The barriers of Sanskrit pedantry and bondage to outward forms were swept away before it. The men of Maharashtra found to their amazement that their national literature had passed through a new birth, and that poetry could speak to them in the familiar language of their homes, and illumine with a new beauty the actual world in which they lived.

Tilak's love of natural beauty and his extraordinary gift of expression are sufficiently proved. But a passage in his great poem *The Flower of the Forest* must be quoted for the elegance of style and beauty of sentiment. The poet complains that the flower is wasting its beauty in the lonely waste and urges it to come and live in the world of men :

Yet once again I tell thee—life and love,
These are not twain but one, for love is life,
And to lose love is to be surfeited
With nothing else but self, which is to die.
He that for love's sake scorneth happiness,
He only findeth happiness fulfilled.
He that for love's sake yieldeth up his flesh,
He only findeth true salvation.

Love is salvation, love is happiness,
Yea, love is heaven, and God Himself is Love.
Come, let us clothe us in the form of love,
And then perforce must we be joined with God?
Ah! sweetest flowret, He that rules this world,
Love is His Name! What can I tell thee more?
Cease now thy hermit days and come with me!
None other boon but this I ask of thee.

The poem has received many interpretations but we must find room for Sir Narayan Chandavarkar's. He wrote:

"In this poem some have discerned the doctrine of the Bhagavad Gita about contemplation and action preached by the poet. It may be so; but to me it is enough to read into it a simpler moral, that our habitual way of treating flowers is more or less desecration. The moment flowers bloom we pluck them for our gods or women; and the gardens of God, where they form such a splendid galaxy of stars to teach us how they grow and worship, are laid bare and turned into waste places. So we turn flowers, as we turn men, into means, when they ought to be all ends in themselves. Mr. Tilak's heart of poetry bloomed when he felt the forest flower in its proper place; the flower then entered into his spirit and yielded music. True gardener he and the like, who give room enough for the soul of man to grow in his proper place like a flower living free in its garden, instead of being plucked for our selfish ends to decorate our bodies and serve our tables of artifical life."

Now the flower poems naturally develop later into the rich Nature poetry in which gods and hearts and rivers and hills play their part. Indeed the whole earth becomes a temple filled with the presence of God and resounding with his praises.

I waited, nor had need to tarry long
When earth broke into universal song.
The trees with mute, gesticulating speech
Proclaim Thy still-new wonders, each to each.
The birds pour forth their blitheful minstrelsy;
Known unto them their language—and to Thee!
What marvel if I, too, with them awhile,
Sharing their secret utterance, nod and smile.
The grasses' rippling merriment and dance—
How could mere voice such utterance enhance?
The babbling brooks entranced sing Thy praise;
The mountains listen in entranced amaze.
Saith Dasa, O my God, where'er I be
In this Thy world, Thy worshippers I see.

The last group of secular poems comprises his national and patriotic songs. His *Beloved India* is the National Anthem of Maharashtra. The late Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, no mean judge of poetry, wrote very warmly of these and other literary efforts of Tilak. "Tilak," he wrote:

loves his land, sees in it a diadem of the terrestrial globe,' sights the vision of saints, seers and soldiers of the past of his country, discerns a beneficent Providence in India's association with Britain, and sounds the poet's trumpet-call with his larger faith and hope for the future. Mr. Tilak's poem called *Ranasing* has all this power of prophecy in it, and I for one have read it heartened many a time. There dwells the soul of his flowering poesy in it. To enter into the spirit of that poem and let that spirit flow into ours, we must read along with it his poems headed *Tumultuous Noises*, *Uproar*, and *Absence of Unity*. The poet meets a number of men, some educated, others illiterate, who wrangle over the present times in India, when Congress and conference, Moderate and Extremist, Atheist, Theosophist and

Arya Samajist, Brahman and Sudra, touchable and untouchable, social reformer and social reactionary, Moslem and Hindu, divide the minds and hearts of India, and no one can say where we are and whither we are going. On another occasion the poet seems mad with joy when all around him is conflict, and he is asked how he could be musical amidst all this noise and disturbance. These poems give his answer—it is out of discord concord will come, as light comes out of darkness; the very noises of the times, so tumultuous, have behind them the song of God, which struggles to come out. And, says the poet in his poems on *Co-operation*, on *True Liberty*, and on *Perpetual Youth*, it will be a song of harmony if in the midst of these discords his countrymen will follow him, and see with open vision how Nature in India—her mountains, rivers, trees, plants and birds, seeming to give discordant noises, and going different ways, work all together co-operant for God's ends, because they are selfless. Let the student of Mr. Tilak's poetry end the perusal of these poems with his lyric *Always Young*, and find hope for his country in its perpetual youth. India is ancient we say. Yes, her youth and growth are ancient, and therefore eternal. 'Come and see,' says the poet. The vision is for him who *will* see. See it with Mr. Tilak's two lyrics, *Beloved India* and *Triumph Britannia*, which conclude the first volume of his poetry."

We have already referred to his hymns and religious songs. They are gathered together in the *Bhajan Sangraha* published in 1906. The bhajans are of many kinds. Some are adapted for preaching and singing in connection with evangelistic work. Others are intended for Christian worship. Of the latter some are hymns of praise, some of penitence

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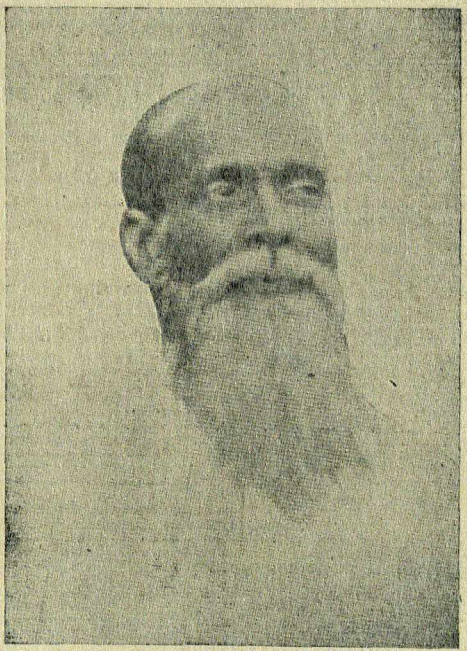


NARAYAN VAMAN TILAK.

some are in the form of petition, and many are hymns of personal devotion and consecration. Mr. Winslow selects three hymns: *The mother Guru, A broken and contrite heart,* and *A Christmas Carol* as typical pieces deserving of high praise. The hymns, of course, lose much of their original force in translation, but even in the English version, one could see the beauty of the true hymn. A word must also be said of his great attempt at Epic poetry.

The *Christayan* belongs in the main to the last period of Tilak's life. For many years he had cherished the design of writing a life of Christ in Marathi verse, which should be the first great Christian Purana, comparable with the Ramayan, or life of Rama.

From time to time Tilak made every effort to complete the Epic. But the *Christayan* does not breathe the spontaneity of his hymns as he had to force the task on himself. And then his mind was full of an anthology of Marathi poetry. Fragmentary as it is, the *Christayan* however will remain as "a masterpiece of Christian Marathi literature." But

during the last years of his life the composition of his abhangs and the organization of "God's Darbar" occupied most of his time; and so it came about that, when he passed away, of the long poem which he had planned he had written but the first section, that on the Incarnation, extending to some sixty-two pages, comprising eleven chapters, of which the last is incomplete. The work was published posthumously by his son in 1921.

The *Abhanganjali* is the crown of Tilak's work, and though their Christian conceptions will make it difficult for his Hindu brethren to appreciate them fully, it is by these that he will be remembered in the years to come. Their simple charm recalls the elevating atmosphere of the New Testament. Here is one in the wreath of songs he was contributing week after week to the DYNANODAYA—songs which won for him the sobriquet of the Christian Tukaram of Maharashtra.

"The more I win Thee, Lord, the more for Thee I pine;
Ah, such a heart is mine
My eyes behold Thee and are filled, and straightway then,
Their hunger wakes again!

My arms have clasped Thee and should set Thee free,
but no,
I cannot let Thee go !
Thou dwell'st within my heart. Forthwith anew the
fire
Burns of my soul's desire.
Lord Jesus Christ, Beloved, tell, O tell me true
What shall thy servant do ?
(*Abhanganjali*, No. 124.)

"Here we have once more the same cry that echoes with such passion of desire through the songs of all the Maratha poet saints." A critic of Maratha poetry recalls that Namdev uttered it five centuries ago :

"Why dost Thou leave me suffering ?
O haste and come, my God and King !
I die unless Thou succour bring.
O haste and come, my God and King !

Like Tukaram too he had a mystic sense of union with his Maker. His vision of Christ leading to a final decision, and his experience of trance-like ecstacy in which all consciousness of the world is lost, are brought in a beautiful little poem *Love's Samadhi*. Here Tilak exhibits something of the mystic vision of Sadhu Sundar Singh.

Ah, Love, I sink in the timeless sleep,
Sink in the timeless sleep;
One Image stands before my eyes,
And thrills my bosom's deep;
One Vision bathes in radiant light
My spirit's palace-halls ;

All stir of hands, all throb of brain,
Quivers, and sinks, and falls.
My soul fares forth ; no fetters now
Chain me to this world's shore.
Sleep ! I would sleep ! In pity spare;
Let no man wake me more !

And yet Tilak was no visionary. He was full of warm sympathy for the sufferings of mankind and he threw himself wholeheartedly into all social and humanitarian movements. With all his Brahminical love of abstractions, he was diligent in deeds of service which he valued even more than his poetry.

The untiring vigour and youth of his spirit, which remained unchanged till the end, is seen in the following poem, translated, it is believed, by himself :

What has been done is not enough, do something more
Labour on, oh labour on, do something more !
Vain is the mango tree which holds but one cluster of blossoms ;
Fruitful it might be called, yet in very truth it is fruitless.
Not for a handful of jewels is earth called the mother of riches,
But for the mines of gems that lie hid deep in her bosom.
Ending and death are one, no need for cavil or questions; To feel that one's work were done were in truth to die prematurely,
Unresting, the spheres roll on, nor is sleep ever known to their Maker;

That the Maker's servants should rest, what a false ideal and unworthy!
Cleave not to the thought that the past holds enough of good in its keeping;
What is good, what is fair, what is best, this is known alone to the Godhead
Speak not of less and more, thus yielding again to temptation;
Why strive ye to limit the life that knoweth no limitation?

RENOUNCING THE WORLD

After twenty years of quiet, faithful work in the service of the Mission, he was now launching out upon a new quest with the same spirit of dauntless adventure that had marked his early days. In July 1916 he wrote to his son:

"I am at present studying, and meditating on the life of St. Paul, not for others but for my own personal guidance and help. I am doing it humbly and prayerfully. . . . God has been leading me, where I can't say just now, but I can say towards some larger service. India needs Christ, not so much Christianity, and Christ she is to get in and through Indian apostles, as God raises them. I am praying for this."

More and more he felt that God was calling him to become such an "Indian Apostle". "I trust that I am the elected Tukaram for Maharashtra," he writes; and adds, with characteristic boldness, "a Tukaram and a St. Paul blended together." He believed that hundreds would follow him, and that together they

would build up an Indian Church on genuinely Indian lines.

Nevertheless, for a year after this, yielding perhaps to the persuasions of kind friends who were loth to let him go, Tilak still remained in the service of the Mission. But in July or early August of 1917, says his biographer, there came to him a vision of Christ—a vision too sacred to be described at first except to his closest friends, but about which later he composed several abhangs, the first of which is here given in translation:

Ye ask, and so to tell ye I am bold;
Yea, with these eyes did I the Christ behold,—
Awake, not sleeping, did upon Him gaze,
And at the sight stood tranced with amaze.
"My mind wonders," I said, "it cannot be!
"Tis but my own creation that I see!
"Poor hapless fool!"—for so did I repine—
"How crooked and perverse a faith is mine!"
Yet was my patient Lord displeased not,
Nor for one moment He His child forgot:
Again He came and stood regarding me;—
Ah, surely ne'er was mother such as He!
I called to Him in sudden agony.
"My child," He answered, "wherefore dost thou cry?
"I am before thee, yea, and I within;
"Merged in a sea of blindness hast thou been.
"Lord, grant me eyes to see!" I cried again,
And clasped His feet in ecstasy of pain.
He raised me up, He held me to His side,

And then—I cannot tell what did betide;
But this alone I know, that from that day
This self of mine hath vanished quite away.
Great Lord of yoga, Thou hast yoked with Thee,
Saith Dasa, even a poor wight like me!

The meaning of this dream was a clear call to Christ. His mind was made up, and on September 6, 1917 he wrote to the American Marathi Mission thus :—

The War, its moral consequences in the world, the new life and new angle of vision which it has diffused in nations, the new aspect of the mode of the world's thought and will, all this affecting India has made India quite ripe and quite ready to accept the great Originator and Helper of human life—social, political, moral and spiritual—Jesus Christ. But India will go after a man, a man elected by God to meet her ideals. Most humbly, but most firmly, I state to you and to the world that God has elected me, a weak sinner, for this purpose.

Dr. Hume replying on the mission's behalf expressed their consent to his wish in a note of touching solicitude and earnest admiration for Tilak's resolve to renounce the world in true Hindu style and become a true servant of God. So on September 8, at the age of fifty-five, Tilak announced his *Sannyasasram*, the traditional last stage of life according to the old Sastras. The *Sannyasasram* lasted but twenty months—" twenty months of gloriously crowded life of service untainted by worldly

considerations of any kind"—the service most truly Christian. The principal work that engaged him during this intensive period, apart from literary activity, was the movement he called "God's Darbar."

God's Darbar

The Darbar was the outcome of convictions which had been gradually forming in his mind as to the relation of Christianity to India's ancient faiths and as to the way of presenting Christ to India. The aims of the Darbar were stated to be:

"To form a brotherhood of the baptized and unbaptized disciples of Christ, by uniting them together in the bands of love and service without in any way opposing, or competing with Christian Missions, Churches or other Christian organizations; to esteem all as our brothers and sisters, since our Father-God dwells in all hearts; to imitate 'the Son of Man,' the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Guru, who served men in uttermost love, though they nailed Him to the Cross; to manifest an eager desire to be considered the true brothers and sisters of that 'Son of God'; this brotherhood to become a real universal family, to be known as real friends of men and real patriots, through whom the world gains once more a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that the Christ who was originally Oriental may become Oriental again; that Christian love, Christian freedom, and the Christian strength which enables men to rise above circumstances may be demonstrated to the world; that Christianity may gradually lose its foreign aspect and become entirely Indian; and the character of this brotherhood shall be such as to create in our fellow-countrymen the

kindly attitude which will lead them to glory in thinking of Christian people as their very own."

His Last Days

But he could not go like this for ever with a body—the frail and uncertain vehicle of his indomitable spirit. The closing days are described with touching simplicity by Mr. Winslow. In Jan. 1919 he wrote :

"I am experiencing a very strange spiritual phenomenon. I am ill, very ill indeed, suffering from more than one symptom, sometimes in bed unable to move this way or that. But I pray ; my prayer is such as absorbs me altogether in itself; and the result is that I am well, so well that it is very hard for anyone to believe that I was sick a short time ago. Thus it has been going on almost all through this month. This hour I am very ill, and the next hour I am very well. . . . This hour the *ghar* rules the *ghardhani*, the next hour *ghardhani* is himself again and rules the *ghar*.

But by the end of that month he was worse again, and was persuaded to go for treatment to the Wadia Hospital, of the United Free Church Mission, at Poona, where he remained throughout March and April.

On April 16th he wrote :

Neither doctor nor I can tell you whether I am improving. But one thing is certain, and that is, 'Blessed, doubly blessed, is all this pain ; it is experiencing the Cross in my body. Blessed, thrice blessed, is this sickness! it is perfect union with Christ.'

In May he was transferred to the J. J. Hospital in Bombay, where it was hoped that an operation might be possible; but once again the doctors dared not operate, and he became rapidly weaker. When his wife and daughter visited him, on the day before he died, he gave them, in the midst of burning fever, his last message.

"He asked us not to fear death, as it was only a temporary bodily separation, which led to a perpetual union of souls and a passing into a better life. He asked us to rise above circumstances and be victors in the battle of life with the help of God defying all the forces of evil."

The spirit in which he faced death can be seen best in the abhangs which he composed during this last illness.

Lay me within Thy lap to rest;
Around my head Thine arm entwine;
Let me gaze up into Thy face,
O Father-Mother mine!

So let my spirit pass with joy,
Now at the last, O Tenderest!
Saith Dasa, Grant Thy wayward child,
This one, this last, request!

On Friday, the 9th of May, his spirit, says his Christian biographer, "passed with joy" to the "great festivity"; and it was the note of festival which marked the service in the Hume Memorial Church, in

Bombay, the next evening, after which his body was carried to Worly to the strains of his own bhajans, and there cremated, according to his own wish.

SUSIL KUMAR RUDRA

IN THE present circumstances of India, politics are more absorbing than anything else; and naturally, politicians loom large in the eyes of the public. Workers in other spheres of life, though eminent in their own way, do not attract quite that attention and respect which they deserve. Such was the fate of Principal Rudra, the noble-hearted patriot and educationist, whom Mahatma Gandhi revered as a "silent servant." Only the very few who came in personal contact with Rudra knew anything of his intense patriotism, his enthusiasm for all progressive causes, his high intellectual attainments and his generous and comprehensive sympathies. In an age of communal wrangles he stood for peace and unity. Indeed he was very much like Hakim Ajmal Khan whom he resembled in more than one respect—in his lofty patriotism, his freedom from communalism, and his devoted friendship with Mahatma Gandhi and C. F.

Andrews. When Susil died on Tuesday 30th June 1925, the two friends wrote of him in the most touching terms. Mr. Andrews recorded that in his last moments Rudra's thoughts were about his country. One of his last utterances was "O my country, my dear country." The love he bore to Mahatma Gandhi was almost too sacred to write about. Writing in YOUNG INDIA, Mahatma Gandhi recorded some striking instances of Susil's unfailing devotion to himself and his own feelings for the truly Christian patriot.

"Ever since my return home in 1915," writes Mr. Gandhi, "I had been his guest whenever I had occasion to go to Delhi. It was plain sailing enough so long as I had not declared Satyagraha in respect of the Rowlatt Act. He had many English friends in the higher circles. He belonged to a purely English Mission. He was the first Indian Principal chosen in his College. I, therefore, felt that his intimate association with me and his giving me shelter under his roof might compromise him and expose his College to unnecessary risk. I, therefore, offered to

seek shelter elsewhere. His reply was characteristic: 'My religion is deeper than people may imagine. Some of my opinions are vital parts of my being. They are formed after deep and prolonged prayers. They are known to my English friends. I cannot possibly be misunderstood by keeping you under my roof as an honoured friend and guest. And if ever I have to make a choice between losing what influence I may have among Englishmen and losing you, I know what I would choose. You cannot leave me.' 'But what about all kinds of friends who come to see me? Surely, you must not let your house become a caravanserai when I am in Delhi', I said. 'To tell you the truth', he replied, 'I like it all. I like the friends who come to see you. It gives me pleasure to think that in keeping you with me, I am doing some little service to my country."

Mahatma Gandhi adds that his open letter to the Viceroy giving concrete shape to the Khilafat claim was conceived and drafted under Principal Rudra's roof. "He and Charlie Andrews were my revisionists. Non-co-operation was conceived and hatched under his

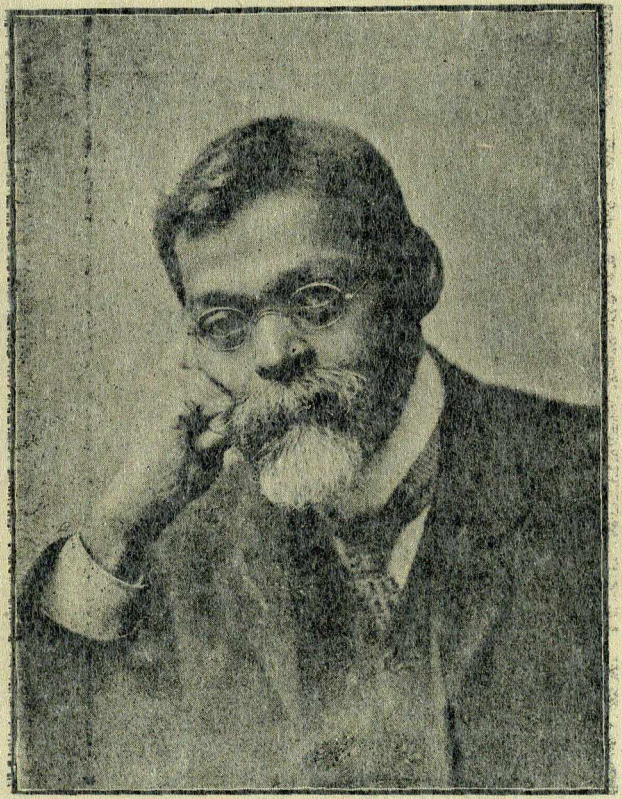
hospitable roof. He was a silent but deeply interested spectator at the private conference that took place between the Maulanas, other Musalman friends and myself."

Mr. Andrews himself has written more than one appreciation of Susil's character and his devotion to the country. Among his numerous references to Principal Rudra's activities we must draw special attention to his articles in the YOUNG MEN OF INDIA. In the series of articles Mr. Andrews contributed to that Journal soon after Susil's death, we have a fairly copious and detailed account of Susil's life and work, and we make no apology for reproducing the sketch at some length. It will be noticed that Mr. Andrews wrote at considerable length, but we must here be content with these extracts which reveal the character and genius of a truly Christian patriot.

"Susil Kumar Rudra" "wrote Mr. Andrews," was the oldest and dearest of all my Indian friends, and I owed to him more than I owe to anyone else in the world: for he it was who really taught

me to love India with all my heart,—truly and sincerely, and in no artificial manner. He carried me through those first intensely critical days of my life in India, when I might easily have taken a wrong turn, and have in consequence become that which I should have hated myself for becoming.

"Our original friendship grew out of an earlier friendship, which I had with Basil Westcott, the youngest son of the late Bishop of Durham, and the youngest brother of the present Metropolitan of India and the present Bishop of Lucknow. Basil and I were the closest friends in our college days; and practically speaking never a single day passed without our meeting each other and having meals together. We shared together the common ideal of coming out to India to join the Cambridge Mission in Delhi, which Basil Westcott's father, the Bishop of Durham, had founded more than thirty years before. Basil came out to India first, and we used to correspond with one another quite regularly every week. The long letters I received from Basil in Delhi constantly referred to Susil Kumar



SUSIL KUMAR RUDRA.

Rudra, who became for Basil (as he became afterwards for me) a guide, philosopher and friend in the very early days of his own Indian missionary life, which was so suddenly to be ended by death.

"In the few days that I remained in Delhi, I got to know Mr. Rudra intimately as a friend. It was a case of love at first sight, and this love never seemed to change or vary or alter on either side; there was never, throughout the whole of the twenty-one years that followed, the slightest shadow cast upon our friendship. From the very first day I found that his house was my own. He made one so welcome in it, that I knew that it was no formal invitation when he told me all that he had was mine, and that I must always feel his own house, as my own house, and his own children as my own children. They were very young; for only a short time before Mr. Rudra had lost his wife by a terrible illness after giving birth to his youngest child. The father had been left quite disconsolate, when his wife, who was the one stay and support of his home, was gone. He had to bring up his three children

and to be both father and mother to them and also to carry on the whole of his work in the college at the same time. I think it was the wonderful sympathy of Basil Westcott at the time of Susil's greatest sorrow which won his heart more than anything else. In all his difficulties, which followed the death of his wife, Basil was able to give him comfort as perhaps no one else could do. Therefore, when I came to Delhi and we learnt so quickly to love each other, it was the most natural thing in the world, that I should come into the same place in his life that Basil had occupied before my coming. It would be difficult to explain how extraordinarily simple and easy this was. There was not the slightest barrier of race, caste, or creed between us. Indeed it often seemed to me as though I had known him already all my life, and I think he felt the same thing towards me; for he used often to tell me that it was quite wonderful to him how simply he had learnt to love me. I have spoken of it as easy and simple; but if it had not been for the circumstances which I have already explained, about Basil, I do not

think it could have been so simple and natural as I have said. Susil Rudra was extremely shy, self-diffident, and reserved with strangers; and it was not at all an easy thing for him usually to break through that reserve quickly. But I would repeat the phrase I have already used and say again, that with both of us there seemed to be love at first sight and that love at first sight never altered or wavered.

"In the course of the year 1905 (if my memory holds good), the vital issue came as to whether Susil Rudra should be appointed Principal of the College, or one of the European staff should be appointed Principal over his head. Two names had been suggested. One was my own, and the other was the name of Mr. Western, who is now the head of the Cambridge Mission. We both protested with all the strength we could against any such act, which should place a younger European over the head of an Indian of such experience and wisdom as Mr. Rudra himself. Fortunately, we had the sympathy of many of the Cambridge Brotherhood on our side, but the Bishop of Lahore, at that time, was strongly

against any revolutionary step (as it was supposed), such as the appointing of an Indian to be principal of such a large college, as that of St. Stephen's College, Delhi. The Bishop's point of view was that the Indian parents would object to such a step being taken and also that in any emergency an Indian would not have sufficient strength of character to command the situation.

"The issue became so vitally serious, that I was obliged at last to offer my own resignation from the Mission, if any supersession of Mr. Rudra, as Principal, was made by the committee. In the long run, the result reached was a supremely happy one. Mr. Rudra was appointed Principal by the almost unanimous vote of the Mission Brotherhood, and he remained Principal of the College for more than seventeen years.

"During those years of his principalship, the College flourished as it had never done before. Instead of distrusting him as Principal, the parents showed, in a practical way, that they trusted his wisdom and guidance even more than they trusted that of any European. Fur-

thermore, when different times of crisis occurred, some of them of the most serious character, Mr. Rudra, as Principal, always rose to the emergency and carried the College through the crisis without any break whatever. It is not necessary to enter into details concerning this step, which was taken with such brilliant result because it became known all over India and in England also, that the Cambridge Mission, by its bold policy of trusting the Indian and placing him in authority over the European staff, had shown in a more signal way than mere words, that it was possible for Indians to govern themselves and to exercise government over others with wisdom and discretion.

"I well remember how Mr. Gokhale, while he was sitting on the Royal Commission, joyfully cross-examined me with regard to Mr. Rudra's principalship, with one single object in view all the while. He wished to elicit from me the fact that a staff of eight European Oxford and Cambridge graduates of high distinction, found it the greatest pleasure and satisfaction of their life in India to serve under an Indian Principal. I was as eager to tell the

good news as he was eager to put the question to me. It was quite interesting to watch the effect of that declaration on Lord Islington and other members of the Commission, including Mr. Ramsay MacDonald who had come out fresh from England. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald himself did not fail to drive the matter home; and his cross examination was on exactly similar lines to that of Mr. Gokhale. Every point that Mr. Gokhale made, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald made also; and there can be no doubt that this page of evidence in that Royal Commission on the Public Services of India carried very great weight, both with the Government of India and with the Government of Great Britain.

"Mr. Rudra, as Principal, gained his remarkable influence owing to two inseparable qualities in his own character and nature. He was profoundly unselfih and profoundly Christian. His devotion to Christ was the very centre of his unselfishness, and it was through that unselfishness of character, that he showed most clearly in deeds rather than in words his supreme devotion to Christ. No one who is

truly unselfish can be otherwise than humble ; for service is the very soul of humility. Therefore, with Mr. Rudra, unselfishness was always marked by a perfectly natural humility —the humility of one who is truly great and wise.

" Something must now be said about Mr. Rudra's own Christian position. He was all through his life one of the most sincere and devoted Christians I have ever known. His love for Christ was the deepest thing of all his inner experience, and his daily conduct was consciously built up on his devotion to Jesus. Every act of the day was done in the name of Jesus, and the thought of Christ was very rarely absent from his mind even for an hour. I have rarely met anyone in all my life who turned so naturally to Jesus Christ for an answer to all his difficulties, as Susil Rudra did. Just as the sunflower turns towards the sun, instinctively and naturally, so in his daily life Susil Rudra turned towards Jesus for his light and inspiration.

But this conscious personal faith in the living Christ was not gained in a day. It was

with the greatest difficulty that Mr. Rudra passed through the critical time of his youth in Calcutta, when intellectual trials on every side beset him and for a time disturbed the very foundations of his belief in Jesus and his inner life. He had often told me about these inner struggles, while he read scientific works and studied every book that gave any light upon the subjects which were dearest to his heart. For a time the light had grown dim; and it was only in the atmosphere of the Oxford University Mission, in Calcutta, that he was able to regain his devotion and to solve his intellectual problems. For some years he lived within the precincts of the Oxford Mission House, in Cornwallis Street, Calcutta, and the life of simple devotion led by the fathers and sisters of that Oxford Mission did more than anything else to re-establish his Christian faith and to solve his intellectual difficulties. When once the strugg le was over, a pure faith came back; and at no subsequent period in his life did he ever go through the same stormy tempests of doubt, which had assailed him in the years of his early

youth, while studying in the University of Calcutta."

Mr. Andrews then relates some personal incidents which reveal the depth of Susil's character and the source of all his inspiration in Jesus Christ.

One of the most perfect things about him was his entire and utter freedom from any race prejudice or feeling of dislike for members of another religion, or creed, or race, or caste. So deeply had he been filled with the Christ spirit of treating every one as his brother and his friend, that it did not seem even possible for him to make any distinction between man and man. I have seen him dealing with the College sweepers with a tenderness and a delicacy of perception of their needs that often put me to shame, and taught me lessons of sympathy and humility. It was at his own suggestion that again and again gatherings were held at the College in which the sweepers were treated as guests and made partakers of the family festival of the College days. Another lesson which I learnt

from him was the treatment of those who served as the College servants, with an absolute equality and respect and even reverence. For it is only through *their* work, as he used to say that we ourselves are able to do *our* work. When I was in Simla, shortly before his death, an old servant who had been with him for many years, found me out almost immediately after my arrival at the house of the Raja Sahib, Sir Harnam Singh, on Summer Hill, and asked me at once concerning the 'Burra Sahib' —for that was the name by which he was always called in the College. The servant had tears in his eyes as he spoke to me; and he told me that he was determined to get leave from his present work in order to go down and do something to help the 'Burra Sahib' in his sickness. He came to me again and again, and when he could not get leave to go down, he asked me what he could get to send to Mr. Rudra in his illness. I mentioned 'Oranges,' which the doctor had ordered; and within half an hour, he had returned from the bazaar with all the oranges he could find, and asked me personally to take them down and give these,

as his offering, to his former master. This servant was a Mussalman and not a Christian, but even to mention such differences as these seems out of place when speaking of Susil Rudra, for he had the most wonderful gift of all of utter sympathy with those of different religions from his own. The Hindus in Delhi claimed him as almost a fellow-Hindu; and the Mussalmans in Delhi claimed him as almost a fellow-Mussalman. The Sikhs were also devoted to him and some of his most affectionate students in the College belonged to the Arya Samaj who had his warmest sympathy and support. Swami Shraddananda was always a most welcome guest at his house. Mahatma Gandhi has told in the pages of YOUNG INDIA how Principal Rudra's house was his home right up till non-co-operation and even after non-co-operation had begun. In the same way, Hakim Ajmal Khan Sahib of Delhi was one of his very dearest friends; and Hakim Sahib would come to call on the 'Burra Sahib' and Principal Rudra himself would go quite constantly to see the Hakim Sahib, in mutual friendship and deep regard. It was

Nagpur, was so deeply touched by the beauty of Susil Rudra's character, that his whole life was silently moulded by what he saw. All his instinctive sympathy with India was marvellously deepened and widened and strengthened by his daily contact with the Principal of St. Stephen's College, Delhi. A short time ago, when I was with him in Nagpur, we spoke together about this, and mutually told each other what an unspeakable debt of gratitude we owed to Susil Rudra. * * *

"Faith in Christ was the very soul of his soul, the very heart of his heart, the very life of his life. He could say, as few men could say, the words of St. Paul : 'I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' Again and again when I questioned him and asked him about this wonderful and beautiful faith, he would tell me that it came to him through a sense of the mystery of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Christ was always to him the Risen Christ of mankind, the living Lord of life and death. It was this Risen Lord whom he himself followed. According to the words of the Apostle

Paul, he could say ; 'Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. If he then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.'

"The resurrection of Christ from the dead was therefore to Susil Rudra, not so much a simple historical truth (though he believed implicitly in the historical fact of the resurrection), but rather a living experince to be experienced anew every day with living power. He was in communion day by day, not with any fanciful picture of Christ, not with some mythological theory of Christ, but with One whom he truly felt to be living and risen from the dead, and the Lord of life and death. This, then, was the source of all the strength of his inner life ; and, in his last illness, this faith in the Risen Christ supported him day by day and carried him through the valley of the shadow of death."

Such was the life of the Christian patriot and scholar who had so profoundly impressed Mr. Andrews by his strength of character and Christian piety. Indeed there was a kind of spiritual bond between him and his two friends

—Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Andrews. "Though he was a Christian," wrote Mr. Gandhi, "he had room in his bosom for Hinduism and Islam which he regarded with great veneration. His was not an exclusive Christianity that condemned to perdition every one who did not believe in Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of the world. Jealous of the reputation of his own, he was tolerant towards the other faiths." That is to say, Susil Rudra was not a Christian in the narrow and communal sense of that word, "but religious motive was the foundation for all his acts."

SADHU SUNDAR SINGH.

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SADHU SUNDAR SINGH.

The Indigenous Church

THE *raison d'etre* of foreign missions is the ultimate creation of indigenous church and ministry, self-supporting, self-propagating and independent in character. The whole history of foreign missionary effort in India is an epitome of the attempts to reach this ideal consummation. So far as India is concerned, the ideal is not in sight by any means, in spite of the anxiety evinced by both foreign mission bodies and indigenous Christians, for its realization. Gradually, the ideal has assumed the nature of a stringent test by which to ascertain the progress of missionary enterprise as a whole or that of individual churches and mission bodies in this country. The failure made by both indigenous churches and foreign mission bodies to achieve this ideal furnishes evidence that Christianity in India has not outgrown its exotic character; and

the failure is also a measure of the extent to which the indigenous Christian community has identified itself with the great national movements in India.

One of the signs evidencing the desire of the indigenous Church to be free is the presence of the independent religious worker or preacher. There are now scores of indigenous Christian preachers who belong to no denomination, but are like the wandering friars or *sanyasis*. Untrammelled either by dogmas or forms of worship, and free to interpret Christ in their own way, a great future lies before this kind of missionary work if properly directed. At present, it is still in its infancy, but its development in numbers and influence on the popular mind render it an agency with great possibilities of good or evil. India has always been hospitable to the independent *sanyasi* preacher, and Christian friars are no exception to this. Nowhere do we find any credible account of an independent Christian preacher building up a Church or body of Christian believers. With the preacher ends

the movement. The historian will draw a moral from such movements. Religion without dogma, bare preaching and exhortation without adequate safe-guards for permanency in personal religious experiences, religious conviction without conservation through the Sacraments is barren of result and ephemeral. Jesus Christ was and is one of the greatest of independent religious Preachers, but He not only inculcated a distinctive religion but He insisted on its nurture through the Sacraments.

An Independent Preacher

Among all the independent preachers in India, Sadhu Sundar Singh stands unique. He presents the spectacle or perhaps the only attempt of the indigenous Church to resuscitate the ancient ideal of a true religious *sanyasin*. He is attached to no denomination, he faithfully preaches Christ as depicted in the four Gospels, and he is pledged to the threefold vow so dear to ascetics of all ages and creeds—poverty, celibacy and chastity. The problem of Sadhu Sundar Singh is the problem that every now and then has presented itself in the

whole history of the Christian Church. In every age and in every land, there are men and women who feel compelled to preach and exhort without undergoing any theological training. Such persons chafe under the restrictions imposed by denominational Churches. They have a mandate from above which must be obeyed. So far, only the Roman Catholic Church has been supremely successful in dealing with such. It is too early to predict anything about Sundar Singh except that he is the sole example in India of a successsful independent Protestant preacher.

Birth and Early Life

Sadhu Sundar Singh is a Sikh by birth. The Sikh nation is for various reasons of peculiar interest. Arising first as a religious sect resolved to reform abuses and to lead men back to a simpler, purer worship, it eventually developed into an organized military power, determined to avenge its wrongs and persecutions. Through centuries, says Mrs. Parker in her fascinating sketch of the Sadhu, its history knew many and bitter experiences, but pride of race, love of arms and a stiff cling

ing to their religious doctrines are to this day great characteristics of the Sikh nation. From such a stock sprang Sundar Singh. His father was Sirdar Sher Singh, a Sikh by descent, and a wealthy landowner in Rampur, in the State of Patiala, where on September 3, 1889, Sundar was born—the youngest son in the family. One of the family is Sirdar A. Nath Singh, commander of an Indian force in one of the Sikh States, while others have risen to even higher distinctions still.

As a child, Sundar was brought up in the lap of luxury. Every year as the hot weather drew on, he was taken with the family to spend the summer in the cooler air of the Himalayas, usually to Simla. His mother, we are told, was a refined and gifted lady, very broadminded in her sympathies. She was on friendly terms with the American Presbyterian Mission ladies and permitted their visits to her home. From his earliest days the relationship between Sundar and his mother was of the tenderest character. He was the youngest of the family and he seldom left her side. She would often say to

him, 'You must not be careless and worldly like your brothers. You must seek peace of soul and love religion, and some day you must become a holy sadhu.''

How well this blessing has been fulfilled will be evident from the following pages.

By the time Sundar was seven years of age, he had learnt the *Bhagavadgita* from beginning to end in Sanskrit. And then, at the age of fourteen, he lost his mother. "How he missed her gentle companionship no one knows, but to-day when he speaks of her, his voice is tender and his eyes look sad."

His Conversion

Sundar Singh's first contact with Christianity sprang from his education in a Mission school, where the daily Bible lesson was taught by a devoted indigenous teacher. The teaching operated on a mind naturally inclined and addicted to religious disquisition and enquiry. The inevitable result followed and Sundar Singh was baptised on his birthday. September 3, 1905, according to Anglican rites in Simla.

The Sadhu himself has given a vivid account of the immediate cause of his conversion. His experiences are always dramatic, and he expresses them in words of moving simplicity and directness. There is always a touch of the miraculous in every one of his experiences :—

'I was such an enemy to Christianity that I not only spoke ill of and persecuted missionaries, but several times I tore up and burnt the Bible because I thought that the Christian religion was false, and Hinduism alone was a true religion. One day in front of my father, I poured kerosene oil on the Bible and throwing it on the fire I burnt it. My father tried to prevent me, but so bigoted was I that I disobeyed him, thinking that by so doing I was pleasing God.

After burning the Bible I became very restless, and I was in a very miserable condition. Three days after burning the Bible, finding that Hinduism gave me no comfort, I decided to commit suicide, because to live in such misery was impossible. Very early in the morning (at 3 a.m) I arose, and, taking a cold bath, I began to pray. 'If there be any God let Him show me the way of salvation, if not, then I will commit suicide by placing myself on the railway.'

Up to 4-30 no answer came. Presently, there came a light in my room. In that light the beloved and glorious Face of Christ appeared, and showing His wounded hands in which the nail-prints clearly showed, He said, 'Why do you persecute me? Behold, I gave My life upon the cross for you, that the world might have salvation.' Upon hearing this, His words sank like lightning into my heart, I immediately became filled with joy, and I was changed for all eternity.

Although Christ disappeared after speaking thus to me, the peace He gave me will remain for ever. This was not imagination. If Buddha or Krishna had shown himself it would have been imagination, for I worshipped them : but for Christ to show Himself, He

whom I hated, is a miracle, and clear proof that He is a living Christ. Neither was it a dream for no one can see a dream after taking a cold bath, and a dream cannot completely change a life. This was a GREAT REALITY.

In the case of Sadhu Sundar Singh, Baptism was the logical result of his researches into comparative religion. His family connections, his prospects of inheritance were the means of subjecting him to persecution in order to dissuade him from leaving and deserting his ancestral religion. Several attempts were made by his relatives to get him away, and violence was used on one of these occasions, so that the police had to be called in to quell the disturbance. But the most trying occurrence to Sundar was when his aged father came to make a last appeal in the hope of drawing him away. The sight of the father's stricken face and figure, we are told, made a deep impression on the boy, and as the old man spoke of the great love of his mother and happy days of his childhood, "there passed in fleeting panorama before Sundar's mind all the happiness of his old home, and the love that had sheltered his early days." His tears, says his biographer, scorched

his cheeks, whilst a mighty struggle went on in his heart. But he was not left to struggle alone, for he felt the presence of One who stood by him and reinforced his soul's resolve to take up his Cross and follow Him.

A Great Vow

During the hard days of his search after God, Sundar had made a vow that if God would lead him into peace, he would sacrifice all that life could offer him. And now the day had come when he could make an utter self-surrender for Jesus Christ. He had long felt drawn to the life of a sadhu, and knowing what such a life involved, he willingly made the final sacrifice for it. His books and personal belongings were soon disposed of, and on October 6, 1905, just thirty-three days after his baptism, he adopted the simple saffron robe that was to mark him off for all time as one vowed to a religious life. With bare feet and no visible means of support, but with his New Testament in his hand, Sadhu Sundar Singh set out on the evangelistic campaign that has lasted to this day.

A Wandering Sadhu

From 1905 until about 1911, Sadhu Sundar Singh wavered as to his precise scope of field preaching and labour. He wandered aimlessly through Patiala and other parts of the Panjab, Kashmir and Afghanistan preaching in the open air and individually exhorting. He had immediately after Baptism and in spite of his youth deliberately adopted the saffron robe of the *Sadhu*. A certain maturity of religious experience determined this step, and it has been the means of introducing his religion to communities that had until his entrance been rigidly and continuously closed to all Christian influence. The most remarkable feature of Sadhu Sundar Singh's labours among the varied races of Northern India, Tibet and other allied countries has been the influence exerted upon the religious teachers and guides of these several communities. The history of indigenous religious effort in India, if not in the East, discloses no movement so fruitful in result among the priestly classes. In Tibet, Sadhu Sundar Singh had found ready listeners among the Lamas

scattered throughout the invulnerable monasteries of that priest-ridden land. Similarly, the Sanyasi mission and the conversations with *rishis* in Western Tibet afford an instructive example of this distinctive feature of Sadhu Sundar Singh's work. What effect it will have is another matter., But the point for remark is that Sadhu Sundar Singh has peculiar aptitudes for preaching to the priestly classes on account of his ascetic connections.

After his return from Tibet, he had a great desire to go to Palestine in the belief that to see the place where his Saviour had lived and died would inspire him to fuller and better service. But when he reached Bombay, he found it impracticable, so in 1909, he returned to North India through the Central Provinces, preaching as he went.

Preparing for the Ministry

Soon after, Sundar Singh underwent a course of studies at St. John's Divinity College, Lahore, The years 1909 and 1910 were spent in study, and during vacation time, he continued his evangelistic work as heretofore. It was now that he, with Mr. Stokes of

Kotgarh, inaugurated the Brotherhood of Service. And like the great English preacher John Wesley, "the Sadhu looked upon the world as his parish, and he preached everywhere and to all who would give heed to his Message."

A Preacher of the Church but of No Denomination

In 1911, Sadhu Sundar Singh finally decided with the full approval of his Diocesan (Bishop Lefroy) to launch out as an independent religious preacher subsisting on the alms of his hearers. But Sadhu Sundar Singh has been careful to almost invariably insist upon his converts being admitted through Baptism into the Christian Church. He has no predilections for any particular Church; but directs each convert to the nearest Mission station. Such a course of conduct implies self-abnegation which is by no means a distinctive element in the character of most independent preachers. Some of Sadhu Sundar Singh's converts have followed the example of their leader. Kartha Singh is the most conspicuous example, and it is noteworthy that, like Sadhu

Sundar Singh, he comes from Patiala. The nature of the influence exerted by Sadhu Sundar Singh can be guaged by the fact that he was assiduous in his labours not only in far-away Tibet but also in his home in Patiala. In this respect, Sadhu Sundar Singh stands alone and unique among most, if not all, indigenous preachers of modern times. The secret of Sadhu Sundar Singh's success is two-fold. In the first place, he is a real and true Sadhu. He has relinquished wealth and power for Christ. He has no home except where he resides for the time being. He has no ambitions to found a Church as a distinctive body of Christians. Secondly, he has no denominational prejudice although he believes in Church organization and in the Sacraments. His preaching is based on personal experience. He believes in the power of the Bible to carry conviction to the minds of his hearers. From a mere provincial or local worker, his influence has naturally and inevitably developed into a natural feature. He is unaffected in manner conscious of nothing but the message he feels charged to impart.

TRAVELS IN TIBET

Sadhu Sundar Singh went to Tibet in the hot weather of 1913 and returned to Northern India for the cold season. Here he chanced upon one whom he calls the Maharishi of Kailash, an aged saint in meditation on the inaccessible heights of the Himalayas. The Sadhu gives a thrilling account of his experiences with the "Maharishi." Early next year, he was in Bengal, and by the end of the year he had traversed Nepal, Sikkim, Kashmir and Bhutan. We have no space here to detail his experiences of travel in these parts, his great experiment in fasting, his imprisonment and the miracles he is reported to have wrought among the mountain folks of Northern India.

IN MADRAS AND SOUTH INDIA

Early in 1918, without any idea of the protracted tour in front of him, the Sadhu came down to Madras intending to visit a few places before starting for Tibet. But his fame had preceded him, and invitations poured in upon him from all over South India. An offer voluntarily made by a gentleman in Madras to act as interpreter for a few weeks caused

him to alter his plans. and to accept a programme which eventually included Travancore and Ceylon.

Every day fresh entreaties reached him from all directions, and out of them grew that great evangelistic tour not only through the South and Ceylon, but also Burma, the Federated Malay States, China and Japan.

Travels in the East

In the cosmopolitan cities of Rangoon, Singapore and Penang, the large audiences were perhaps as mixed in race, status and language as anywhere in the world. Here the Sadhu came in contact with Chinese, Japanese, Malays, Europeans and various Indian peoples, and his addresses were usually translated by two interpreters. Urdu, Burmese, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Chinese and English were the means of communication, whilst business men of different races, army men, clerics and government officials took the chair or shared the same platform with him.

After an extensive tour in China and Japan, the Sadhu returned to Kotgarh. But the call of Tibet was insistent and once again in 1919

he found himself preaching the Gospel in various places of Tibet.

VISIT TO ENGLAND

Meanwhile, his friends were persuading him to go to England. Towards the end of 1919 his good father made truce with him and even gave him his passage money. The Sadhu left Bombay by the *City of Cairo* on January 16, 1920. The ship stopped at few ports on the way. On Sundays he was asked to conduct services for all on board, and on February 10 he arrived at Liverpool and was met by friends. Two days afterwards he found himself in the home of Dr. Rendel Harris in Manchester.

The *Westminster Gazette*, a leading London paper, under the heading 'A Remarkable Visitor to London', on March 10th published the following:

Without irreverence, Sadhu Sundar Singh, who is now on a mission to Christian England, may be described as the nearest approach in the flesh to the best pictures of Jesus. His smile irradiates a strong Eastern face, and when he unbends, as with little children, he becomes a winsome personality and immediately wins their confidence. This morning as he entered the little room of the Cowley Fathers I thought I had never seen a more remarkable Eastern figure. His hair and beard are black—a soft glossy

black—and the skin is a wonderfully clear olive. His garb is that of the Indian ascetic, and his tall, manly figure adds dignity to the flowing robes. On his feet were sandals, which however are discarded in his own country. 'We have our castes, in India,' he explained to me, 'our high castes and our low castes, and people do not understand you if you say that having embraced Christianity you belong to this sect or to that. They think it is another caste. I am free to go anywhere, and there is no barrier of sect.'

He is carrying out his principles in England in a notable manner High Churchman like Father Bull and Evangelical Churchman like the Rev. Cyril Bardsley are associated with his visit. The Bishop of London is to preside over a meeting of London clergy when Sadhu Sundar Singh will speak. At the same time he is speaking in Westminster Chapel for Dr. Jowett and in the Metropolitan Tabernacle for the Baptists. He is just teaching Western people the true Catholic spirit from Eastern lips.

The Sadhu then went to Cambridge, and as at Oxford besides other meetings, he addressed one for undergraduates at Trinity College. Returning to London he fulfilled some engagements for the Y. M. C. A., spoke at the Annual Meeting of the London City Mission, the Central Missionary Conference for Great Britain, went down to Brighton and thence to France to address the meeting of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society.

On April 1st, he occupied the pulpit of Dr. Jowett at Westminster, who introduced him with the words, 'I feel it an exceptional

honour to have beside me in my pulpit a Native Christian from India, who has been so manifestly blessed in Christian work.'

The Sadhu had a crowded programme in England. He spoke at the Albert Hall under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society and again at the Queen's Hall where thousands had gathered to listen to the eastern mystic who spoke in parables like the apostles.

In America

Dr. Jowett and others introduced the Sadhu to the American people, and an interesting American programme was sketched out for him. On May 30th the Sadhu was at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. Then followed engagements in Hartford, Baltimore, Pittston, Princeton University, Brank Presbyterian Church, New York, the Marble Collegiate Church, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Boston and other cities. On June 25th he went to the Silver Bay Students' Conference, and spent four days addressing eight hundred students and their leaders. Early in July he was in Chicago, and passed on to Iowa, Kansas and other places, finally arriving at San Francisco

where his journey and work in America ended.

Whilst in America the Sadhu met with several of the chief religious leaders, amongst whom were Dr. Fosdick and Dr. Robert Speer. He was also entertained in one place by Mrs. Stokes, the mother of his friend and fellow-sadhu of former days.

In Australia

On July 30th 1920 the Sadhu left America for Australia. On August 10th he landed in Sydney, and for a week he held meetings in churches, chapels and the University buildings. A Sydney paper commenting on one meeting said:—

'One could never forget Tuesday morning, August 10th, when the Sadhu walked into the grounds of St. Andrews' Cathedral to address a meeting of 700 clergy and others in the Chapter Home. It was the nearest conception one could form of what our Lord must have been like when he walked the streets of Holy City old, for the very presence of the Sadhu brought with it an atmosphere of things Christlike. . . and during the twenty minutes he was speaking, there was not a sound. And now he has gone back to his own land, but ere he went he left us a new vision of the Christian Saviour.'

He spent his 31st birthday in Adelaide, and spoke at Melbourne, Perth and Fremantle to large and enthusiastic gatherings.

BACK TO INDIA AND TIBET

The Sadhu arrived at Bombay on Sept. 25.

In 1921 he left for Tibet again with a donation from his father towards his humanitarian and evangelical work.

TO EUROPE AGAIN

On his return to India he was pressed with invitations for another tour to Europe. Prior to his departure he stayed for a couple of days with Mahatma Gandhi in his ashram, and on January 29, 1922, he embarked for England. He visited Jerusalem and Cairo, passed through important centres in Switzerland and Germany, Sweden and Norway, Denmark and Holland. In England he took part in the Keswick Convention when he preached a sermon.

Insistent calls to Finland, Russia, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Servia, Roumania, the West Indies, America and New Zealand, had also to be declined and an immediate return to India following the Keswick Convention was arranged for.

WITH THE EMPRESS OF RUSSIA

Arrived in Denmark the Sadhu spent three days in Copenhagen, and besides speaking at

several meetings he received a call to visit the Dowager Empress of Russia at the King's palace, and on May 27th a remarkable interview took place. At its close when the Sadhu rose to go, Her Imperial Majesty desired him to bless her. With humility he replied that he was not worthy to bless anyone, since his hands had once torn up the Scriptures, but that His pierced Hand alone could bless her or anyone.

In India Again

On his return to India by the end of the year he was advised to take some rest from constant evangelical work. The cool air and the quiet of the Himalayas having restored his health, the Sadhu began his preaching tour, visiting important centres in northern and western India. In the spring of 1923, he visited his old home at Rampur, and on April 10 wrote:—'My father died in Rampur. I am not sorry, because I shall see him again in glory. He passed away as a Christian. My separation is only bodily and for a short time."

A Preacher In Parables

A word must must now be said of the power

and persuasiveness of the Sadhu's utterances. Wherever he goes he carries about him the spell of a magnetic personality. Apart from the respect which the Sadhu robe always commands in a country like India, the Sadhu has the appearance of a truly venerable ascetic. "No one can look upon him for the first time without being struck by his close likeness to the traditional portrait of Christ." His utterances are simple, direct, personal. He does not philosophise, much less does he engage in vapid eloquence or tiresome rhetoric. Whether in English or in Urdu he speaks the simple language of the Bible and his talk is always interspersed with parables and allegories.

And his simple narration of spiritual experiences touches the imagination of the listener as no eloquence could do. THE DAILY CHRONICLE wrote :—

> The secret of this man's power lies in his utter self-abandonment to a high ideal .....It is surely a token of good that we of the West, who are so obsessed with the materialistic spririt of the age, have come in close contact with one who stands for the supremacy of the spiritual.'

An English divine truly remarked :

The Sadhu is perhaps the first of the new apostles to rekindle the fire on dying altars.

A True Missionary

Sadhu Sundar Singh has been a missionary in the truest sense of the word. He deliberately selected regions hitherto unreached by foreign Mission bodies. Tibet, Kashmir, Nepal, Bhutan, the upper reaches of the Himalayas, these have been his fields. Nor can it be said that he had chosen easy spheres. He has undergone persecution and torture in no ordinary degree. He has faced death more than once. Like St. Paul he carries on his body the marks of his devotion to the Master. But he is a missionary—a "bringer of good tidings"—nothing more. He has no particular message to the organised indigenous churches beyond that which every Christian preacher carries—devotion to Christ.

Sadhu Sundar Singh in his life and preaching conveys a great lesson to the indigenous Church. Although intensely nationalistic in his outlook and in his preaching, he has no hatred of the foreigner. Like St. Paul, he is international in his vision.

His Christian experience has enabled him to transcend the petty bounds of colour, race and caste. He is a true *sanyasin* in this respect. Foreign missionaries would do well to cultivate this spirit.

Extraordinary success in soul-winning has not altered the Man or his Message. His message appeals equally to the priest and the laymen, to the Hindu and the Christian. Among western audiences, he has left a great impression because of a purely oriental presentation of Christ. Prayer constitutes an important element in his teaching and personal life.

It is claimed that Sadhu Sundar Singh is a Christian mystic but it does not appear that St. John has influenced him much either in his preaching or in his interpretation of the Christian life. St. Paul and St. Peter would appear to be more closely akin in view-point to Sadhu Sundar Singh than any other of the Apostles.

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